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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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K'taka govt okays caste census starting Monday

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

The Karnataka government approved the Statewide Social and Educational Survey, or cast census, between 22 September and 7 October. The government said, "In view of the details stated in the proposal, approval is accorded to the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission to undertake a survey on the social and educational status of all citizens of the State." The order notes that the Chairman of the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission had earlier written to the government stating the intention to carry out the survey during the above period. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

T'gana man shot by US cops; kin allege racial attack

HYDERABAD, 19 SEPT

Mohammed Nizamuddin, a 30-year-old from Telangana, was allegedly shot dead by US police following a scuffle with a roommate. In a recent social media post, he claimed to be a victim of "racial hatred and discrimination." Nizamuddin's father, Mohammed Hasnuddin, revealed that the incident occurred on September 3, although details remain unclear. Police stated they responded to a 911 call and attempted to deescalate the situation before Nizamuddin was shot after allegedly holding a knife. Hasnuddin appealed to Indian authorities for assistance. *—PTI*

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Felt at home in Pakistan, says Sam Pitroda

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) condemned Congress overseas chief Sam Pitroda after he remarked that he "felt at home" in Pakistan, suggesting an emotional connection with the country. BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla accused the Congress of having an "undying love" for Pakistan, claiming they've communicated with Hafiz Saeed via Yasin Malik. "Is anyone surprised?" he said. In response, Pitroda said, "Our foreign policy... must first focus on our neighbourhood... There is a common gene pool. I've been to Pakistan... I don't feel like I'm in a foreign country." *—AGENCIES*

iPhone 17 launch creates frenzy across India

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Apple's launch of the iPhone 17 on Friday sparked an unprecedented frenzy in major Indian cities, with fans camping outside stores for up to 21 hours. In Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, excited customers formed long queues, eager to snag the latest devices. "I was in the queue since morning, and I am excited to buy the iPhone of this colour," exclaimed Ashraf from Sangam Vihar, clutching his cosmic orange device. Retailers reported record foot traffic, attributed to the brand appeal. *—PTI*

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A huge tree was uprooted on St. Mark's Road near the SBI Head Office due to incessant rain on Thursday and Friday; CCommuters struggle through a waterlogged Outer Ring Road, near Summanahalli flyover junction in Bengaluru *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Overnight rains clog City

IMD issues yellow warning, warns of power cuts, falling trees

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Heavy overnight rains battered Bengaluru, bringing the City to a standstill on Friday with waterlogging in several low-lying areas and traffic snarls on key stretches.

The downpour, which began late Thursday night, continued intermittently on Friday morning.

City recorded 65.5mm rainfall in the 24 hours until 5.30am on Friday, with the Automatic Weather Station (AWS) reporting 66mm. Doddaballapura received 60mm, Chandurayanahalli in Ramanagara 46mm, and Hessarghatta in Bengaluru Rural 43mm.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for City, predicting light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by lightning and gusty winds reaching 30–40kmph at isolated places.

Vijayapura, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Tumakuru, Kolar, and Chikkaballapura are also under yellow alert.

According to Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, Kanagamakalapalli in Chikkaballapura district recorded 130mm, followed by Tirumani 114mm; Beechaganahalli, 114mm; Chelur_1, 101mm; and Bhandarkumtha in Bidar district, 112mm.

Gadag received 51.9mm; Ramanagara's Chanduraya nahalli 46mm; Tamaka in Kolar 21.5mm, while Mangaluru reported 20.7mm.

The IMD cautioned that heavy rain could cause temporary power outages, waterlogging, and uprooting of weak tree branches.

"Take safe shelters; do not take shelter under trees. Unplug electrical and electronic appliances immediately. Get out of water bodies and stay away from objects that conduct electricity. Drive carefully if you are travelling," the IMD advisory said.

The rains highlighted City's infrastructure woes. *—PTI*

Another school van gets stuck in City

A school van full of students got stuck on the Balagere–Panathur stretch in City on Friday morning, marking the second such incident in less than 10 days on the road. The problem was reported around 8.30am, with residents alleging that the driver was unable to move the vehicle safely because of poor road conditions. Residents have described the stretch as a "death trap",

saying that despite repeated inspections, the government has failed to provide a lasting solution.

Read Preamble: SC junks plea against Banu's Dasara invite

Indian Supreme Court; International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court dismissed a plea challenging State's invite to International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate Mysuru Dasara celebrations this year.

"What is the Preamble of this country?" a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta asked the counsel appearing for the petitioner, who challenged the 15 September order of the Karnataka High Court which dismissed the pleas against the State's decision.

The festival is set to begin on 22 September.

The counsel said the State's decision affects his Article 25 rights. Article 25 deals with freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

"That is purely not a secular activity. It attains the colour of a spiritual act or a religious act," he said.

The bench, however, called it a State event and asked him, "It is not a private programme. The State is organising it. How can the State distinguish between A, B and C?"

The apex court referred to the High Court's order which noted that one of the petitioners before the High Court had shared the stage with Dr Nissar Ahmed – also from the Muslim community, who was invited for the inaugural of the festivities in 2017.

"Is that correct or not?" the bench asked the petitioner's counsel. The bench asked whether the freedom of religion right of the petitioner was not affected in 2017. *—PTI*

'FOR NON COMPLIANCE'

EC DE-LISTS 474 POLITICAL PARTIES

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Election Commission (EC) has de-listed 474 more registered unrecognised political parties (RUPPs) for violating regulations, primarily due to their failure to contest elections over the past six years. This follows the de-listing of 334 RUPPs on 9 August.

"In continuation, in the second phase, ECI delisted 474 RUPPs on 18 September, based on non-contestation in elections conducted by ECI continuously for six years. Thus, 808 RUPPs have been delisted in the last two months," the poll body stated.

Previously, there were 2,520 RUPPs, with 2,046 RUPPs remaining after this exercise. Additionally, there are six recognised national parties and 67 state parties.

The EC has also identified 359 RUPPs that failed to submit their annual audited accounts for the last three financial years and did not file election expenditure reports. This purge aims to enhance the integrity of the political system, especially with Bihar Assembly polls approaching in November.

Notably, the Supreme Court had prohibited the EC from "derecognising" political parties, but the authority found a means to "delist" them, with potential for re-listing without new recognition processes. *—PTI*

Adani case: Delhi court bins 'sweeping' gag order on scribes

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

A Delhi court has set aside an order asking four journalists to take down alleged defamatory content against Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL), saying the effect of removal of the articles by an ad interim ex parte order was "sweeping" and it had the "effect of decreeing the suit itself without a trial".

In the 18 September order, which was made available on Friday morning, the court said, "I find that the case is fit for stay of the impugned order dated 6 September since extensive directions have been passed by the trial court without hearing the appellants."

Acting on AEL's defamation complaint, a civil judge directed 10 defendants to take down the contentious material, like articles and social media posts, already published on various platforms, including websites, within a stipulated period. District judge Ashish Aggarwal heard the challenge to the civil judge's decision and held that unless appellants were heard, the civil court couldn't have inferred that the journalists made "unverified, inaccurate and irresponsible statements". *—PTI*

UPSC INTRODUCES AI FACE AUTHENTICATION FOR EXAMS

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) chairman, Ajay Kumar, on Friday announced that a pilot program has been successfully conducted to test an Artificial Intelligence-enabled facial authentication technology for quick and secure candidate verification.

This initiative, developed in partnership with the National e-Governance Division, aims to strengthen the integrity of the examination process and enhance the entry experience for candidates at examination centres, Kumar stated.

"The UPSC plans to use facial recognition of candidates from all its examinations, including the civil services exams," Kumar added.

The system reduced verification time to an average of just 8 to 10 seconds per candidate while adding security, he claimed. *—PTI*

India selects 'Homebound' for 2026 Oscars

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Hindi film 'Homebound' has been selected as India's official entry for the 2026 Academy Awards in the Best International Feature category, announced N Chandra, chairperson of the selection committee, during a press conference in Kolkata on Friday.

Chandra revealed that a total of 24 films across various languages were considered for this prestigious representation. "It was a very difficult choice. These were films that touched the lives of people," he remarked. He further emphasised, "We were not judges but coaches. We were searching for players who have made their mark."

The 12-member selection committee included producers, directors, writers, editors, and journalists.

Directed by Neeraj Ghaywan and produced by Karan Johar and Adar Poonawalla, 'Homebound' features Ishaan Khatter, Vishal Jethwa, and Janhvi Kapoor in lead roles. The film tells the story of two childhood friends from a small north Indian village striving for a police job that offers them the dignity they have been denied. *—Agencies*

SCUBA DIVING ACCIDENT

Singer Garg dies in Singapore

GUWAHATI, 19 SEPT

Popular singer from Assam and youth heartthrob Zubeen Garg died while scuba diving in Singapore on Friday, organisers of a festival in the Southeast Asian country said.

He was 52, and is survived by his wife.

Garg sustained injuries during scuba diving, and was rushed to a hospital, where he died in the intensive care unit while undergoing treatment.

He had gone to Singapore to participate in the three-day North East Festival, which was scheduled to begin on Friday.

"It is with deep sadness that we share the news of Zubeen Garg's passing.

While scuba diving, he experienced breathing difficulties ……Despite efforts to save him, he was declared dead in the ICU around 2.30 pm IST," a statement issued by organisers of the North East Festival said.

Apart from being a singer, music composer, a lyricist and actor, Zubeen was also a philanthropist. Zubeen has sang in over 40 languages. His song 'Ya Ali' was a huge hit, for which he bagged the Global Indian Film Award. Some of his popular albums are Xapunor Hur, Junaki Mon, Jantra and many more. He also sang in several Bollywood movies.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed deep sorrow over the demise as tributes poured in from artists.

"It is very painful news and an immense loss to the state and the nation," Sarma said.

"Zubin losing his life in an accident is shocking and terrible news. My deepest condolences to Garima and his family," said Bollywood music composer Pritam.

—PTI/Agencies

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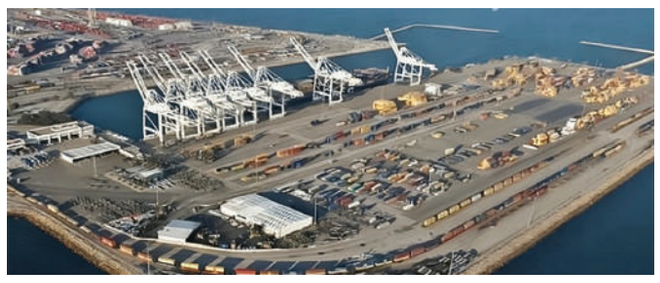


US SANCTIONS DELHI BACKED IRAN PORT

WASHINGTON, 19 SEPT

The US has decided to revoke the sanctions exception linked to Iran's Chabahar Port issued in 2018, in a move that could significantly impact India. Starting 29 Sept, individuals linked to operations at the port will be exposed to sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA), the US Department of State said in a release.

It said the decision was "consistent with Trump's maximum pressure policy to isolate the Iranian regime."

India and Tehran had recently signed a 10-year deal to operate Chabahar in partnership with Iran's Port and Maritime Organisation. Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL) committed about $120 million, along with plans to raise another $250 million in credit for infrastructure.

Chabahar it provides India a route to Afghanistan and Central Asia without relying on Pakistan, and it connects to the International North-South Transport Corridor linking India with Russia and Europe. *—Agencies*

Sugarcane farmers protest in Mysuru

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

The State Sugarcane Growers Association members staged a protest near the Deputy Commissioner's office in Mysuru on Friday, pressing the government to address their demands. The protesters urged the State to direct Bannari Amman Sugar Mills Pvt Ltd. in Nanjangud to install weighing machines outside the factory, alleging farmers were being cheated in weight and yield assessment. They said the mill must also bear harvesting, labour, and transport costs instead of charging farmers. Citing rising input costs, they sought ₹1,500 per tonne in addition to ₹3,299 fair and remunerative price. Other demands like paddy procurement centres, fixing ₹3,500 per quintal, lake filling, man-animal issues, and fair prices for all farm products. *—SALAR NEWS*

2 cops die in accident days before wedding

BELAGAVI, 19 SEPT

Two police constables on the verge of marriage were among three fatalities in a road accident in Gadag district in the State on Friday morning. The incident occurred when their car collided with a Goa government bus after hitting a road divider. Arjun Nellur, 29, and Viresh Uppar, 31, both from the Karnataka police, were returning to Gadag when their vehicle rolled and struck the bus on the opposite side of National Highway 67 near Harlapur at approximately 6am. "Both constables had to tie the knot in a few days," noted Rural Inspector Sidrameshwar Gaded. The third victim, 43-year-old Ravi Nellur, was Arjun's uncle. Remarkably, none of the bus passengers were injured, despite the severity of the crash. *—SALAR NEWS*

PHOTO: SALAR

Kolar police bust inter-state drug ring

KOLAR, 19 SEPT

Acting on a tip-off, Gulpet police intercepted a Haryana-registered car near Balaji Rice Mill in Tamaka industrial area on Thursday and seized over 20kg of ganja worth more than 20 lakh. Eight people were arrested, while two managed to flee. PSI Vital Talvar said the narcotics were meant for delivery to traders across Karnataka. The arrested were identified as Mohammed Azad, Warris, Raju, Mubarak, Hassin, Javeed, Ranhil — all from Haryana — and Mohammed Afsar from Rajasthan. Police said the gang's modus operandi was to bring stolen cattle from North India before festivals, and on their return commit dacoities or ATM thefts. They are also accused in several cattle theft cases. *—SALAR NEWS*

11 arrested for smearing ink on official

KALABURAGI, 19 SEPT

Eleven Karnataka Rakshana Vedike activists were arrested after they smeared black ink on Public Works Engineer Amin Muktar and Urban Development Authority Commissioner Gangadhar S Malagi during a protest against the removal of a Kannada nameplate at a shop in the City's Kanni Market.

Protesters, angered by the signboard's removal, rushed to spot and smeared ink on officials.

Arrested include Anand Doddamani, Ravindra Saradagi, Raju Mathapathy, Prithvi, Sachin Lokani, Shahila Chavan Apparao Ketari, Vilas Rathod, Chennaveer Biradaar, Praveen Kattimani, and Maitab Ladlesab. *—Salar News*

Caste survey to start from Monday: Govt

CM dismisses reports of dissent within Cabinet

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

CM Siddaramaiah said that the survey of backward castes would not be postponed, amid reports of dissent within his Cabinet *PHOTO: PTI*

The State government gave its approval for the Statewide Social and Educational Survey, or caste census, to be conducted between 22 September and 7 October.

"Deputy Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers of Zilla Panchayats have already been informed through video conference to organise the necessary training programmes at the district and taluk level for the enumerators and to create public awareness to ensure full participation in the survey," the order stated.

Earlier, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the survey of backward castes would not be postponed, amid reports of dissent within his Cabinet.

"We won't postpone it. The Backward Class Commission is a constitutionally formed statutory body. We cannot give it any direction," he said.

Dismissing claims that ministers were unhappy with the survey, he added, "The BJP is doing politics... They are projecting the Congress government as anti-Hindu. I told ministers to unilaterally condemn it."

The Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, led by chairperson Madhusudan R Naik, will start conducting the survey from Monday.

A 60-question questionnaire will be used to gather data on the social and educational status of the seven-crore people in the State.

Meanwhile, the State BJP President BY Vijayendra called on people to identify themselves as Hindus in the religion column, amid a row about the dual caste identity.

He clarified that the caste and sub-caste identification was left to the respective communities to decide, but urged that, "in the interest of the nation and the State, everyone must write 'Hindu' under the religion column."

However, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar asked "everyone to give accurate information during the survey. It would be grave injustice to your community if you don't provide correct details."

—Salar News with Agencies

Bengaluru is home, not leaving: BlackBuck CEO

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Damaged roads on CMH Road near Ulsoor Metro Station and Lavelle Road in City create trouble for drivers *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Online trucking platform BlackBuck's co-founder & CEO **Rajesh Yabaji** clarified that the company is only relocating within the City, and not leaving. In a X post on 18 Sept Yabaji said that Bengaluru is the company's "home" and the that firm will expand its footprint in the City.

The clarification comes after Yabaji's 16 Sept post, where he said that the company had decided to move out of its current location at Bellandur on Outer Ring Road (ORR), citing commuting and road infrastructure issue. The post triggered a controversy with Opposition parties targeting the ruling Congress over the City's consistent infrastructure woes.

Similarly, former Infosys CFO Mohandas Pai and Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw had urged the State government to immediately intervene. Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh had also invited BlackBuck to relocate its operations to Visakhapatnam.

"We unilaterally refute the claims made by some media outlets that we are considering moving out of the City. We are only relocating within the City to a different location, which will facilitate an easy commute for our employees," Yabaji clarified.

"The ORR, the City, and the State have enabled the company with the needed resources, infrastructure, talent density and opportunities to grow into a large company," he said. "We will not only continue to remain in the City, but will also expand our footprint here."

Earlier, the media had pressed Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru portfolio on the matter.

He said the government was not scared of "threats or blackmail".

"I don't know how many potholes may have increased (following heavy rains). But we want permanent solutions," he said on Thursday. He said the government will have a plan ready by Saturday.

—Salar News

Dasara is secular: CM hails SC verdict on Banu

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah welcomed the Supreme Court's dismissal of a petition against the State government's decision to invite Booker Prize-winning writer **Banu Mushtaq** to inaugurate the Mysuru Dasara celebrations this year.

The State government's choice has drawn opposition from some BJP leaders and Right-wing groups.

Siddaramaiah said on X, "I welcome the Supreme Court verdict dismissing the petition filed against the State government's decision to invite Mushtaq."

Reiterating the inclusive spirit of the festivities, the CM said, "Mysuru Dasara cannot be confined to a religious framework. We have always maintained that it is a festival where people of all castes and religions come together to celebrate with joy."

Accusing some groups of attempting to divide the society, he said, "Yet, a systematic campaign of misinformation was carried out against this, attempting to divide society. I believe that now, with the Supreme Court's verdict, our government's stand has been upheld. I pray that Goddess Chamundeshwari blesses the divisive minds that sow seeds of caste and religious hatred with good sense."

Earlier, speaking at the award presentation ceremony for the Vaddarse Raghurama Shetty Social Justice Journalism Award for the calendar year 2024 and the Environment & Development Journalism Award, Siddaramaiah said, "We must have tolerance for other faiths and we should live and prosper together. We must strive for unity in diversity." *—PTI*

7.5K cops, drones to be deployed for Dasara

MYSURU, 19 SEPT

Mysuru City police have roped in 7,500 cops for Dasara duty from 22 September to 2 October. A Rapid Action Force has also been deployed to tackle any emergency situation.

Speaking at a press conference on Friday in Mysuru, Police Commissioner Seema Latkar said that for the first time the city police are planning to use drone cameras for crowd management to prevent any stampede like situation. Additionally, private camera men will be roped in at all Dasara venues.

This heightened security comes in the wake of the 4 June stampede at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, during Royal Challengers Bengaluru's IPL victory celebrations, which claimed 11 lives, as well as the violent stone-pelting incident at Maddur during a Ganesha procession. The department expects over 15 lakh people to the Jamboo Savari procession on 2 October.

Police have ramped up security measures Chamundi Hills, owing to the Banu Mushtaq row *PHOTO: SALAR*

This year, the department has made 48,000 seating arrangements in Mysuru palace, 30,000 in Torchlight parade grounds at BanniMantap. Only people with entry passes will be allowed.

Police have ramp up security measures Chamundi Hills, owing to the Banu Mushtaq row.

Police are anticipating some form of protests.

Along with boots on the ground, digital surveillance will be ramped up with 30, 614 CCTV cameras, both mobile and stationary, to monitor key areas.

Security forces have been also pooled in from across State.

Latkar added that the department has also set up 43 helpline centres for the benefit of tourists, besides diverting the traffic for hassle free traffic movement. *—Salar News*

BARE NECESSITIES

Safai Karamcharis (sanitation workers) and members of Labours Rights Protection Committee protest demanding that their salaries be paid on time at Freedom Park in City on Friday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Kalaburagi woman was murdered as revenge: Cops

KALABURAGI, 19 SEPT

The decomposed body of a 21-year-old woman, Bhagyashree Sulahalli, was found on the premises of a cement factory in the Kalaburagi on Friday, officials said. Police suspect that the murder in Malakhed village of Sedam taluk was an act of revenge by factory workers and the management.

They believe it was linked to the death of Vinod, a worker at the Ultratech Cement factory in the village, police said.

A few weeks ago, Vinod had taken his life after losing his job. His family held Channaveerappa Sulahalli, the president of the workers' union responsible.

Despite intervention of the village panchayat, the family's anger did not subside, and they planned the murder.

When the accused, Manjunath, failed to locate Channaveerappa, he redirected their revenge toward Bhagyashree.

Police also suspect the involvement of his father, uncle and brother in the murder.

Bhagyashree went missing on 11 September. The initial cause of death was suspected to be strangulation. However, preliminary investigation revealed that she was struck on the head with an iron rod.

—Salar News

I will live and die in Ramanagara, says DKS

RAMANAGARA, 19 SEPT

Deputy Chief Minister **DK Shivakumar** reiterated his commitment to home district Ramanagara (now Bengaluru South) by saying that "I am born in this soil, I will live here and die here."

"I have nothing to take from this district as I belong here. My only priority is to empower my people here," he said at an event organised at Ramanagara to celebrate the birth anniversary of former CM Devaraj Urs on Friday. "Some are criticising that I have renamed the district keeping in mind real estate. I believe in principled life and I have done it for the people of this district. We have already decided to make sites in 100 acres of land and distribute them to the needy. We have already instructed officials to clear Bagar Hukum and other lands."

"We have already distributed sites in Kanakapura in about 100 acres. We have given Bagar Hukum land to 8,000 people. DK Suresh has been given the responsibility here," he said.

Targeting the Opposition, he said that JD(S) has lost its opportunity to be in politics.

Hailing Urs as a secular leader, Shivakumar added, "Devaraj Urs is from royal family but he worked for the poor. He uplifted every single community." *—Salar News*

APPLE OF THEIR EYES

iPhone 17 sale draws early morning rush

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

Excited shoppers queued up early outside the recently opened Apple Hebbal store in Mall of Asia to purchase the newly launched products *PHOTO: ANI*

Customers thronged the Apple store here on Friday morning as the company's iPhone 17 series went on sale. Excited shoppers queued up early outside the recently opened Apple Hebbal store in Mall of Asia to purchase the newly launched products. On 9 Sept, the tech giant unveiled its brand-new iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Pro Max, AirPods 3, Watch Series 11, Watch SE3, and Watch Ultra 3.

One of the customers, Mohammad Suhail, who purchased an iPhone 17 said that it was "nice to have a store in Bengaluru."

"We are very excited. The service is very nice... I have been an early buyer for the last few years. We have been waiting since last week. We booked four phones, and this model is comparatively better than the last three models..." he said.

Another customer, Gauri Shankar, said that he is now eagerly waiting for new and updated gadgets, especially the iPhone 18.

"I have been buying iPhones for many years. This was a great experience. This is my first time in an Apple Store. I am very excited and now I am waiting for the iPhone 18," said Gauri Shankar.

- On 2 September, Apple opened its first retail store in City, marking its debut in South India and the company's third outlet in the country.

On 2 September, Apple opened its first retail store in City, marking its debut in South India and the company's third outlet in the country.

The store offers customers the full range of Apple products, services, and support, along with free Today at Apple sessions designed to help users get the most out of their devices. *—Agencies*

City to host first Skill Summit in November

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

State will host its first-ever Bengaluru Skill Summit from 4 to 6 November, with a focus on skills, innovation and entrepreneurship, the government announced on Friday.

Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Dr. Sharan Prakash R Patil said the summit would be the largest initiative of its kind by the department.

"Through the Bengaluru Skill Summit, special focus will be given to youth, particularly women, rural communities and persons with disabilities. Our government is creating a platform of opportunities to shape a better future through skill development," he told reporters at Vidhana Soudha.

The summit aims to nurture youth in line with industry, academic and global standards while enhancing employability. Dr. EV Ramana Reddy, Chairman of the State Skill Development Authority, said schemes like Yuvanidhi have already benefitted thousands and the summit would serve as a launchpad for global opportunities.

Providing skill training to students is a key government objective. With specialised training, youth can compete on international platforms for employment and the summit will serve as a crucial launchpad, he said.

The event is being organised by KSDC, KSDA and KDEM. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

HC grants bail to Mukhtar Ansari's son in forgery case

PRAYAGRAJ, 19 SEPT

The Allahabad High Court on Friday granted bail to Umar Ansari, younger son of late gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari in an alleged forgery case. Umar is accused of using fake documents and the forged signature of his mother Afsa Ansari to get a property released in his favour which was seized under Gangster Act in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur. Justice Gautam Chaudhary passed the order on Umar's bail plea. He was booked by the Mohammadabad police in the case and arrested from Lucknow. Umar was remanded to judicial custody and sent to jail. After a district court rejected his bail plea, he later moved the high court with his appeal.—*PTI*

Kerala Oppn walks out over 'missing' Sabarimala gold

T'PURAM, 19 SEPT

The Congress-led opposition walked out of the Kerala Assembly on Friday after Speaker AN Shamseer denied permission to raise an adjournment motion on the alleged disappearance of over 4kg of gold from Sabarimala. Shamseer cited House rules, saying sub-judice matters cannot be discussed. Opposition leader VD Satheesan argued there was precedent, but the Speaker replied, "Precedence cannot supersede rules, and someone has to bell the cat. I am belling the cat now." Satheesan called the issue serious, noting the High Court has ordered a probe into the matter and devotees have expressed concern . Ruling front ministers accused the UDF of using the gold issue to disrupt the upcoming Global Ayyappa Sangamam. The High Court noted a "glaring and unexplained reduction" of 4.541kg in the gold-cladded copper plates of the guardian deity idols at the Sabarimala Temple.—*PTI*

Russia offers India enhanced nuclear collaboration

MOSCOW, 19 SEPT

Russia has extended an invitation to India for cooperation in the localisation of both large and small nuclear power plants, as part of their ongoing civil nuclear energy partnership. This announcement was made on Friday during the 69th annual session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy in Vienna, which took place from 15-20 September. Alexey Likhachov, Director General of Rosatom, Russia's state atomic energy corporation, discussed the collaboration during a meeting with the Indian delegation. "Talks with India centred on expanding collaboration in peaceful nuclear energy. Rosatom offered to work with India on localising large- and small nuclear power.—*PTI*

TN CM unveils freedom fighter Nachiyar's statue

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin unveils a statue of freedom fighter Queen Velu Nachiyar, hailed as 'Veera mangai' (valorous lady) and India's first woman freedom fighter, at the Gandhi Mandapam Complex in Guindy in Chennai on Friday
PHOTO: X/MKSTALIN

M'rashtra makes e-KYC must for Ladki Bahin scheme

Women with less than Rs 2.5L income get Rs 1,500 under it

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

The Maharashtra government has made e-KYC mandatory for beneficiaries of the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme, giving them two months to complete the process.

A government resolution (GR) was issued regarding this on Thursday, an official said.

The Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana provides monthly assistance of Rs 1,500 to women in the age group of 21-65, whose annual family income is not more than Rs 2.5 lakh.

Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare on Thursday said, "An e-KYC facility has been made available on the web portal, 'ladakibahin.maharashtra.gov.in', for all beneficiaries of the scheme. They are requested to complete the e-KYC process in the next two months."

This process is simple and convenient, and to maintain transparency in the scheme and ensure regular benefits to eligible women, everyone should complete it, she said in a post on X.

This process will also be useful to avail the benefits of other government schemes in the future, Tatkare said.

According to the GR, eligible women must complete their verification and authentication within two months to receive the monthly assistance in their bank accounts.

The e-KYC process will also help women in availing benefits of other government schemes in future, says Aditi Tatkare (pic) ***PHOTO: ANI***

- This process is simple and convenient, and to maintain transparency in the scheme and ensure regular benefits to eligible women, everyone should complete it, Tatkare said.

Similarly, if Aadhaar authentication is not done, the benefits will be withheld, it said.

Beneficiaries will have to carry out the e-KYC process compulsorily every year, the GR stated.

The government had recently revealed that nearly 26.34 lakh ineligible beneficiaries, including men, had enrolled in the scheme and received the monthly allowance.

As per government data, 2.25 crore women receive money under the scheme, which was launched in July 2024. —*PTI*

TERMS IT ANTI-NATIONAL

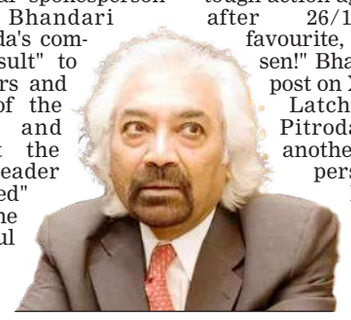
BJP flays Cong over 'felt at home' in Pakistan remarks

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The BJP demanded an apology from Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi on Friday over the party's overseas department chief Sam Pitroda's "felt at home" in Pakistan remarks, branding those as "anti-national".

This came after Pitroda, pitching for a substantial improvement in India's relationship with its neighbours, reportedly said this.

Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari termed Pitroda's comment an "insult" to Indian soldiers and the people of the country, and alleged that the Congress leader had "glorified" Pakistan at the behest of Rahul Gandhi.



"The Gandhi-Vadra family should apologise to the brave soldiers of the country for Pitroda's statement," he said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Congress or Pitroda.

Bhandari said Pitroda's comment has made it clear that there is no place for "patriotism in the Congress's policy and intent".

There is only "love for Pakistan" in the opposition party's policy, he charged.

". No wonder UPA took no tough action against Pak even after 26/11....Pakistan's favourite, Congress's chosen!" Bhandari said in a post on X.

Latching on to Pitroda's remarks, another BJP spokesperson, Shehzad Poonawalla, alleged that the Congress had undying love for Pakistan.—*PTI*

Rahul speaks like an 'urban Maoist': M'rashtra CM on Gen-Z remark

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday accused Rahul Gandhi of speaking like an "urban Maoist", claiming that the Congress leader asked Gen Z to overthrow a democratically elected government.

Gandhi does not believe in the Constitution and rejects the institutions, the CM said.

His remarks came a day after Gandhi launched his fresh offensive against the Election Commission of India (ECI) and reiterated his "vote chori" allegations.

In a post on Thursday evening, the Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition said, "The nation's youth, the nation's students, the nation's Gen Z, will defend the Constitution, protect democracy, and stop vote theft. I always stand with them. Jai Hind!"

"India's Gen Z believes in the Constitution. It has initiated the start-up ecosystem and knows technology. Rahul Gandhi neither understands

Gen Z, nor the youth nor the senior citizens of the country," he said.

Meanwhile, reiterated his "vote chori" allegations and took a swipe at the Election Commission, calling it an "election watchman" who "stayed awake, watched the theft, and protected the thieves".

His remarks accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of protecting those who "destroyed democracy". The EC dubbed the allegations as being "incorrect and baseless." —*PTI*

Rahul, Sonia in Wayanad for private events

WAYANAD, 19 SEPT

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi arrived in Wayanad on Friday for private engagements. They flew from Kozhikode airport to Padinjarathara and were received by KPCC President Sunny Joseph and other local leaders before heading to a hotel. Meanwhile, Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited Sree Kunnathu Mahavishnu Temple in Kozhikode, performed Tulabharam with plantains, and will meet coffee farmers and attend agriculture-related meetings later in the day. —*PTI*

A dam on the Indus river system in Jammu and Kashmir ***PHOTO: PTI***

Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan to get Indus waters: Khattar

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced on Friday that the water saved due to the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan will be made available to Delhi, Haryana, and Rajasthan within the next one to one and a half years.

Following the Pahalgam terror attack, the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan was "suspended."

India informed Pakistan about keeping the treaty in abeyance, citing Pakistan's breach of the treaty's conditions.

The treaty, in effect since 1960, governed the distribution and use of the Indus River and its tributaries between India and Pakistan. The Indus river system includes the main river, the Indus, along with its tributaries: the Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Jhelum, and Chenab.

Under the treaty, India was granted exclusive rights to the water of the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi.

The water of the western rivers -- the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab largely allocated to Pakistan, has now been stopped. India will benefit from their waters. —*PTI*

Tribunals uphold ban on 2 J&K separatist groups

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Two Delhi High Court tribunals have upheld the ban imposed by the Centre on the Awami Action Committee (AAC), led by influential cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and the Jammu and Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen (JKIM). The tribunals, presided over by Justice Sachin Datta, determined there was ample justification for declaring both groups unlawful under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, citing their involvement in activities detrimental to the country's integrity and promoting secessionist agendas.

Meanwhile, Mirwaiz Farooq claimed he has been denied access to Jama Masjid for two consecutive Fridays, stating, "Heavens would not have fallen if we had been allowed to participate in the 'janazah' of Prof. Bhat Sahib." He condemned the authorities for curtailing their basic rights, arguing that "brute power cannot silence faith and the yearning for dignity and justice." The Ministry of Home Affairs asserted that both groups were engaged in unlawful activities funding terrorism destabilising national security. —*PTI*

SC approves AIFF draft constitution

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday approved the draft constitution of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) prepared by former apex court judge L Nageswara Rao with certain modification, and directed the football body to adopt it within four weeks in a general body meeting.

A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi recognised the election of current executive committee members of the AIFF headed by President Kalyan Chaubey and said there is no point in holding a fresh poll, as only one year tenure is left.

On 30 April, the top court reserved its verdict on the issue of finalisation of the AIFF's draft constitution prepared by Justice Rao.The draft constitution, prepared by Justice Rao on the top court's directions, proposed some radical changes. —*PTI*

FARMERS TO BENEFIT

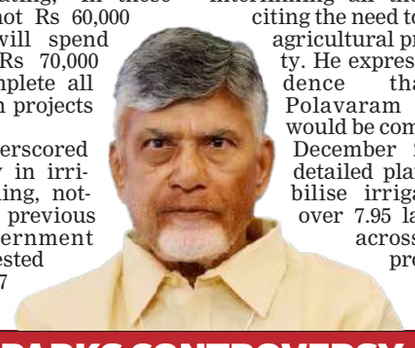
Andhra CM commits Rs 70,000 cr for irrigation

AMARAVATI, 19 SEPT

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced a commitment of more than Rs 70,000 crore for irrigation projects in the state from 2024 to 2029. Addressing the Assembly, he highlighted that currently only 27 per cent of the 402 lakh acres in Andhra Pradesh are irrigated, stating, "In these five years, not Rs 60,000 crore, we will spend more than Rs 70,000 crore to complete all the irrigation projects in the state."

Naidu underscored the disparity in irrigation spending, noting that the previous TDP government (2014-19) invested Rs 68,417 crore, while the YSRCP regime (2019-24) only allocated Rs 28,376 crore. He mentioned that the NDA government has spent Rs 12,454 crore on irrigation in just one year.

The Chief Minister also revealed plans for river interlinking, affirming, "As the first state, I am starting river interlinking. The NDA government will take the onus of interlinking all the rivers," citing the need to enhance agricultural productivity. He expressed confidence that the Polavaram project would be completed by December 2027 and detailed plans to stabilise irrigation for over 7.95 lakh acres across several projects. —*PTI*



DUSU polls: New president assures metro fare concession

Winners of the Delhi University Students' Union elections pose for pictures on Friday ***PHOTO:PTI***

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) president Aryan Maan on Friday said that Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has assured concessional metro passes for varsity students, a key demand raised during the campaign.

The ABVP won three seats, including the president.

Speaking after the results were declared, Maan said that students' participation in DUSU polls showed that claims about Gen-Z being disinterested in campus politics were misplaced.

NSUI presidential candidate Joslyn Chaudhary's said that the polls were were fought with "power of money and liquor.

ABVP national general secretary Virendra Singh Solanki congratulated the winning candidates, saying that the results were a rejection of "excuses" made by the opposition. —*PTI*

- Maan said that students' participation in DUSU polls showed that claims about Gen-Z being disinterested in campus politics were misplaced.

SPARKS CONTROVERSY

BJP insults NCP (SP) leader's parents

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

Maharashtra BJP MLA Gopichand Padalkar's alleged derogatory remarks about NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil and his parents sparked discontent among members of the opposition party, whose president Sharad Pawar called up Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to register his disapproval.

After Padalkar' comments, made recently at a rally in Jat in Sangli district, kicked up a row, Fadnavis also expressed his objection and advised the legislator to exercise restraint.

The comments led to the NCP (SP) staging protests in Ishwarpur (formerly Islampur), Patil's constituency in Sangli and in Thane, where it burnt an effigy of Padalkar.

Patil, who was the state NCP (SP) chief and served as a minister, is the son of late Rajaram Patil, a Congress veteran and one of the pioneers of the cooperation sector in western Maharashtra.

Sharad Pawar expressed his displeasure over the row ***PHOTO: PTI***

Sharad Pawar spoke to CM Fadnavis over phone and expressed dissatisfaction over Padalkar's comments.

Talking to reporters later, CM Fadnavis said he also disapproved of Padalkar's comments.

The NCP (SP) held a protest in Ishwarpur to denounce Padalkar's remarks.

The agitation in Thane was led by MLA Jitendra Awhad.

- The comments led to the NCP (SP) staging protests in Ishwarpur (formerly Islampur), Patil's constituency in Sangli and in Thane.

Raising slogans against the BJP legislator, the party workers burnt his effigy.

Talking to reporters after the protest, Awhad said, "This isn't just about Jayant Patil. It's about the level of discourse in Maharashtra politics. BJP must take responsibility and act against Padalkar. If it doesn't do it, it will be considered as a party that encourages such filth."

The party functionaries said Padalkar had crossed all limits, and challenged him to visit Thane and face the wrath of its workers. —*PTI*

Saudi Arabia must focus on mutual interests: MEA

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

India on Friday said it expects Saudi Arabia to keep in mind "mutual interests and sensitivities" in the wake of Riyadh sealing a strategic defence pact with Pakistan.

The agreement states that "any aggression against either of the two countries shall be considered as an aggression against both".

"India and Saudi Arabia have a wide-ranging strategic partnership that has deepened considerably in the last few years," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

The "Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement" was signed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.

Sharif, accompanied by

Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, was on a visit to Saudi Arabia.

The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia joint statement said the new defence agreement reflects the "shared commitment of both nations to enhance their security." —*PTI*

5 Bangladesh nationals to be deported

AGARTALA, 19 SEPT

Five Bangladeshi labourers detained in Tripura's Gomati district will be repatriated, a senior police officer confirmed on Friday. The men admitted entering India illegally a few days earlier to work in construction and furniture making at Maharani under RK Pur police station. Police intercepted an auto-rickshaw during a routine check on Thursday and detained the five passengers on suspicion, Udaipur SDPO Debanjali Ray told PTI. They have been transferred to a state-run home in West Tripura while the BSF coordinates their return with Bangladeshi authorities. Ray added that the Centre has directed the state to house illegal Bangladeshi nationals in government facilities instead of arresting them immediately. Infiltration is a major issue in Tripura. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X/DGP PUNJAB

38 held in interstate cybercrime racket

PHAGWARA, 19 SEPT

Punjab Police have broken up an interstate cyber-fraud racket, arresting 38 people during a raid at a resort in Phagwara, officials said on Friday. The operation, led jointly by Kapurthala Cyber Cell and Phagwara City Police Station on Thursday night, saw several women among those detained, all from states including Punjab, Delhi, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, Haryana, Odisha, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. Police said the group targeted victims in the US and Canada by posing as software providers and hacking their electronic devices. One key suspect had leased the resort to run an illegal call centre. An FIR was registered under the BNS and IT Act. Officers seized laptops, mobiles and Rs 10 lakh cash. —*PTI*

Bombay HC receives second bomb threat

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

The Bombay High Court received another bomb threat email on Friday – its second in a week – which proved to be a hoax after a full security sweep, officials said. The warning, claiming an imminent blast at the court's south Mumbai premises, was sent to the court's official email early in the morning. Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad officers and sniffer dogs carried out an extensive search but found nothing suspicious. Proceedings continued as scheduled. The High Court had received a similar email on 12 September, which briefly halted hearings during the day. Police registered a case against unidentified senders after the earlier threat and say investigations into both incidents are on to ascertain the sender's IP address. —*PTI*

1 killed, 4 injured in chemical factory blast in M'rashtra

PALGHAR, 19 SEPT

One worker was killed and four others injured in an explosion at a chemical factory in Maharashtra's Palghar district, officials said on Friday. The blast took place at Limbani Salt Industries around 7.30pm on Thursday during the mixing of metal and acid, a highly reactive process, according to Vivekanand Kadam of the Palghar District Disaster Management Cell. One worker died on the spot, while two others suffered severe burns and are receiving critical care in hospital. Two more, stationed slightly farther away, sustained minor injuries and are reported stable. Emergency teams reached the site and contained the situation. Police are investigating and a case was expected to be registered. —*PTI*

Elgar case: SC rejects Rao's bail modification

Rao was required to seek prior permission of the trial court before leaving Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea by activist and poet P Varavara Rao, an accused in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence in Maharashtra, seeking modification of his bail condition.

Rao has sought modification of the condition which required him to seek prior permission from the trial court if he wished to leave the Greater Mumbai area.

The court expressed disinclination to grant modification and the matter was dismissed as withdrawn.

The counsel for Rao, submitted that the health of the activist, who has been out on bail for four years, was deteriorating.

Since Rao's wife shifted to Hyderabad, there was none to care for him,

The top court on August 10, 2022 granted bail to Rao on medical grounds.

The bench continued: "This bail is purely on medical grounds. The order shall not be a precedent for the cases of other accused or the appellant itself on merits."

The top court ordered Rao not to leave Mumbai "without express permission of the trial court".

The Telugu poet was arrested in 2018, from Hyderabad home and was an under-trial in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Initially, Rao was put under house arrest and later taken into police custody. He was later shifted to Taloja Jail in Maharashtra.

In 2021, the Bombay High Court granted him bail on medical grounds.

The court also dismissed Rao's plea seeking a transfer back to Telangana. Rao has been out on medical bail in Mumbai.

The case pertains to alleged inflammatory speeches made at the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which triggered violence near the Koregaon Bhima war memorial located on the outskirts of the city.

The police said the conclave was organised by people with alleged Maoist links. —*PTI*

Varavara Rao's counsel said that he had no one to take care of him after his wife shifted to Hyderabad recently **PHOTO: ANI**

- Initially, Rao was put under house arrest and later taken into police custody. He was shifted in Maharashtra's Taloja Jail. The Bombay High Court granted him bail on medical grounds. A plea seeking his tranfer was to Telangana dismissed by the court.

SC TO HEAR VODAFONE'S PLEA ON QUASHING AGR DEMAND

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court will hear on 26 September Vodafone Idea's plea to quash additional adjusted gross revenue (AGR) demands raised up to 2016-17. A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai noted submissions from both sides indicating scope for resolution. The telecom firm seeks a comprehensive reassessment of dues under the DoT's 2020 guidelines. —*PTI*

DELHI RIOTS: SC TO HEAR UMAR, SHARJEEL, GULFISHA'S BAIL PLEAS

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday deferred to 22 September the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima and Meeran Haider in the UAPA case over the alleged February 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy. They challenge a Delhi High Court order refusing bail to nine accused, citing "conspiratorial" violence. The court said the right to protest is protected but not absolute. All accused have dened the allegations and remain in custody. —*PTI*

OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE

T'gana man shot dead in US faced 'racial hatred'

HYDERABAD, 19 SEPT

The man from Telangana, who was allegedly shot dead by the US police, had claimed that he was a victim of "racial hatred and discrimination".

Mohammed Nizamuddin, 30, from Mahabubnagar district was allegedly shot by the police there following a "scuffle" with his roommate, his family members said.

In a recent post on social media, Nizamuddin said, "I have been a victim of racial hatred, racial discrimination, racial harassment, torture, wage-fraud, wrongful termination and obstruction of Justice.

Citing information received from a friend of his son, Nizamuddin's father Mohammed Hasnuddin said that the incident occurred on 3 September, though it is unclear what exactly happened.

Santa Clara police claimed they received a 911 (emergency call) involving a disturbance between two roommates. When the police reached the spot they received information that the situation had escalated and the suspect stabbed the victim, pinning him to the ground. When the officer saw the suspect trying to stab the victim, he shot four times.

The suspect was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Nizamuddin, a software professional, had claimed that his food was poisoned and he was being evicted out of his residence for fighting against injustice.The victim's father appealed to the Centre to bring his son's mortal remains to India. —*PTI*

- Nizamuddin had said in a post that he faced racial hatred, racial discrimination, racial harassment, torture, wage-fraud, wrongful termination and obstruction of justice.

Rains cripple life in T'gana; Yellow alert on

HYDERABAD, 19 SEPT

The India Meteorological Department has issued a yellow alert for Telangana, for thunderstorms and more rains on Friday. Light to moderate rains with gusty winds were forecast in Hyderabad and surrounding districts.

Hyderabad witnessed heavy rains for the second consecutive day on 18 September, crippling normal life.

Bahadurpura topped the rainfall charts, with the Chandulal Baradari area near Zoo Park logging 86 mm. Close behind were Chandulal Baradari Sports Complex at Doodbowli with 83.8 mm and Roopal Bazar Community Hall in Charminar zone with 77.3 mm. Other localities too saw significant rainfall.

This week's relentless rains followed Hyderabad's heaviest rainfall in five years. The city witnessed a cloudburst-like downpour on 17 September that left major parts of it paralysed. Musheerabad recorded the highest with 184.5 mm.

The flooded waters brought people's life to a standstill. Sumit Jha, a journalist narrated on X how two delivery boys helped him when he had been struggling on a flooded street late at night.

Himachal Pradesh

Meanwhile, a landslide struck near a prominent school in Himland area in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla on Friday, prompting the administration to order closure of the institution for two days.

This stretch was continuously sliding and a massive landslide was witnessed,that damaged a house. —*Agencies*

Flood waters on a waterlogged road in Hyderabad in Telangana lead to massive traffioc snarls on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Lalit Modi's brother held for rape

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Samir Modi, the brother of fugitive businessman Lalit Modi, was on Thursday arrested at the Delhi airport in connection with a 2019 rape case.

Samir, a businessman, was arrested upon his return from abroad today.

Meanwhile, Samir's lawyer has claimed that the charges levelled against him are false and an attempt by the complainant to extort money amounting to Rs 50 crore from him.

The complainant accused the businessman of repeatedly raping and threatening her. Modi allegedly approached her on the pretext of offering career opportunities in the fashion and lifestyle industry and later forced himself on her at his residence in New Delhi's New Friends Colony in December 2019.

The woman alleged that she faced constant threats to her life and family as Samir, already married, used his influence to silence her.

Further investigation was underway. The court remanded him to a day in police custody.

Samir's LinkedIn profile describe him as the managing director of Modi Enterprises, and founder of Modicare Foundation and Colorbar Cosmetics Pvt Ltd. —*PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

PHOTO: FREEPIK

UP man gets death for rape, murder of niece

SITAPUR, 19 SEPT

A court in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district has sentenced a 38-year-old man to death for the rape and murder of his seven-year-old niece, as confirmed by a government lawyer on Friday. The incident occurred in January 2019 under the jurisdiction of the Imalia Sultanpur police station.

Additional District Judge (POCSO) Bhagirath Verma deemed the crime "the rarest of the rare," stating, "This brutal incident against an innocent girl shames humanity, and such criminals have no right to live."

The court imposed a fine of Rs 13,000 on the convicted individual, named Neelu, who was found guilty under IPC sections 302 (murder), 364 (kidnapping), and 376AB (rape of a minor), alongside the POCSO Act.

Neelu reportedly disposed of the victim's body in the Sarayan river after committing the heinous act. —*PTI*

Patanjali contests order on ads against Dabur Chyawanprash

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Patanjali Ayurved has approached the Delhi High Court, contesting an order that prohibits it from airing disparaging advertisements against Dabur Chyawanprash.

Justices C Hari Shankar and Om Prakash Shukla noted the case involves "generic disparagement," with Patanjali's claims hinting at Dabur's products.

"The moment you say ordinary chyawanprash with 40 herbs, you are making a representation to the public," the bench remarked. They cautioned Patanjali, stating that if the appeal was deemed "luxury litigation," costs would be imposed.

The court referenced a previous order that barred Patanjali from stating, "Why settle for ordinary chyawanprash made with 40 herbs?" and required modifications to their print ads.

Dabur alleged that the Patanjali's promotion included misleading claims about the knowledge of other manufacturers regarding the preparation process of chyawanprash.

The case has been scheduled for further hearing on 23 September as Patanjali seeks to discuss the matter further with its counsel. —*PTI*

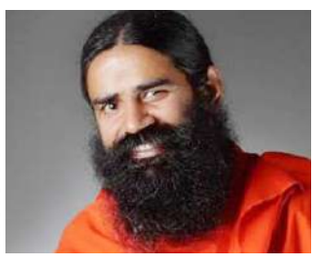


PHOTO: PTI

Kolkata rape: Law college VP withdraws resignation

KOLKATA, 19 SEPT

Awo days after resigning citing stress-related factors, the vice-principal of South Calcutta Law College, Noyna Chatterjee, on Friday said she has withdrawn her resignation following a request from the governing body.

Chatterjee had submitted her resignation three months after the alleged gangrape of a student by three men on the campus.

In her earlier letter, Chatterjee said that she wished to continue as an assistant professor. Earlier, she was criticised for allegedly allowing Monojit Mishra, the prime accused and a former student, a free run on the campus despite complaints of disorderly conduct against him, and for later appointing him as a contractual employee. Mishra and two other students and a security guard were arrested. —*PTI*

Chatterjee appointed the accused as contractual staff **PHOTO: ANI**

ASSAM' PRIDE

Zubeen, musical icon who captured hearts

GUWAHATI, 19 SEPT

Strumming the guitar and belting out one song after another in his inimitable style, Assam's Zubeen Garg had mesmerized youth and elders alike for nearly three decades with his songs and films, which had a universal appeal.

Singer, music composer, film director, and actor Zubeen is credited with singing in over 40 languages and dialects. Still, it was the song 'Ya Ali' from the movie Gangster that brought him fame across the country and earned him the best playback singer at the Global Indian Film Awards (GIFA) in 2006.

The 52-year-old singer, who began singing from the age of three, was an icon for several generations of children and youth who grew up singing or humming his songs.

Be it popular Assamese or western, folk or classical-based songs, Garg gave voice to varied genres of music and excelled in all, with most later-year singers emulating his style of music and singing.

Garg was also never shy of expressing his views on political and social issues.

A large number of Zubeen Garg fan clubs have been set up over the years in every nook and cranny of Assam.

Garg began his professional music career with his debut Assamese album 'Anamika' in 1992.

Garg released many other albums, such as 'Xapunor Xur', 'Junaki Mon', 'Maya' and 'Asha'.

He debuted in Bollywood with his first Indipop solo album 'Chandni Raat'. He sang for films like 'Gaddaar', 'Dil Se', 'Doli Saja Ke Rakhna', 'Fiza', 'Kaante' and 'Zindagi'. He acted in 27 Assamese films and directed 3 others. —*PTI*

Zubeen Garg sang in over 40 languages and dialects. He won the Global Indian Film Awards for his song 'Ya Ali' **PHOTO: INSTAGRAM**

MASKED GUNMEN OPEN FIRE IN COMPANY'S OFFICE IN GURUGRAM

GURUGRAM, 19 SEPT

A group of masked gunmen opened fire at the MNR Buildmark real estate office in Sector 45, causing widespread panic, police confirmed on Friday.

The assailants discharged 25 to 30 rounds at the office on Thursday night, leaving shattered glass strewn across the site.

According to police sources, the shooting was orchestrated on the orders of gangsters based abroad. Around 9.30pm, four to five masked individuals entered the building and fired before fleeing.

A police team promptly arrived to investigate, discovering bullet marks on the office windows and on luxury vehicles parked nearby.

A complaint was lodged by property dealer Shravan Raheja at the Sector 40 police station.

The police has launched a manhunt to nab the culprits.

The police are investigating the incident and witnesses are being questioned. The motive behind the shooting would only be clarified after the arrests, police said. —PTI

PHOTO: ANI

ASIA'S 1ST WOMAN LOCOPILOT RETIRES

Surekha Yadav, who shattered the glass ceiling to become Asia's first woman locopilot, is set to retire at the end of this month after 36 years of service. Yadav joined the Indian Railways in 1989 and became an assistant driver the following year, making history. Born in Maharashtra's Satara district, Yadav completed a diploma in Electrical Engineering before and rose steadily through the ranks in the male-dominated field.

Saudi Arabia-Pak pact worries ex-Indian envoys

The signing of a strategic mutual defence agreement between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is "not a positive development" from India's point of view and New Delhi will have to manage its relationship with Riyadh "carefully and deftly", two former Indian ambassadors said on Friday.

However, the veteran diplomats assessed that notwithstanding this development, India-Saudi Arabia "will remain strong".

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed the agreement, which declares that any attack on either country will be considered "an aggression against both".

The agreement was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Wednesday during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom. The deal came days after an Israeli attack on the Hamas leadership in Qatar, a key US ally in the Gulf region.

Ashok Kantha, India's former envoy to China said, "I don't have details about the agreement, but obviously it's not a good development from our point of view".

He said it not a kind of positive signal coming from Saudi Arabia, and it's "not a positive development".

Asked if it will affect India-Saudi Arabia ties, Kantha, said he didn't want to jump to conclusions.

"Our ties (with Saudi Arabia) are very important, multi-faceted, they are based on several pillars," he added.

It has been a fairly robust, multi-faceted strategic engagement with Saudi Arabia, and "I belive that will continue", the former envoy said, adding, "our relationship with Saudi Arabia, I believe, will remain strong".

The development seems a "bit of a jarring, discordant note" in a relationship which was developing in a "very positive and constructive manner," he said.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif embraces Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after signing a joint defence pact in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The agreement declares that any attack on either country will be considered 'an aggression against both' **PHOTO: PTI**

The Ministry of External Affairs in a statement issued on Thursday said it has seen reports of the signing of the strategic mutual defence pact between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, and New Delhi will study the implications of this development for India's national security as well as for regional and global stability.

Other diplomats said looking at engagements, India has pursued with Saudi Arabia, and the statement issued on the development by the MEA a day ago, it seems, the development "didn't come as a surprise to us".

Veteran diplomat Venu Rajamony said this development is "certainly a matter of concern", pointing to the agreement which declares that any attack on either country will be considered "an aggression against both".

The immediate context of that might have been been Israel's attack on Qatar. But, clearly Pakistan is "aligning itself more and more with Islamic countries and the Gulf Arab countries, than the Arab countries in general", in the context of the development in West Asia, he said.

"It can certainly have implications for India also," the former envoy said.

Rajamony served as India's ambassador to the Netherlands from 2017 to 2020.

He conjectured that in the Saudi mind, this pact "may not be targeted at India".

Asked, will this development impinge on India's ties with Saudi Arabia, Rajamony said, "Certainly, too early to say, Saudi Arabia being an extremely important partner for us."

"So, India will have to manage the relationship carefully and deftly," he added.

Spokesperson of the external affairs ministry, Randhir Jaiswal, on Thursday had issued his response in a statement to media queries related to the reported development.

"The Government was aware that this development, which formalises a long-standing arrangement between the two countries, had been under consideration," he said.

Referring to the MEA statement of Thursday, Rajamony said, whichever way one interprets the development, "it only looks like something negative for India".

"It's not a good sign," the envoy added.

What is clear is that Saudi Arabia is "not in any way abandoning Pakistan, they are coming closer to Pakistan even in security terms," he said.

The Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement states that "any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both," according to the joint statement. *— PTI*

SALAR

Why govts must invest in peace, not just in arms

OTTAWA, 17 SEPT

Global security indicators suggest a significant deterioration in peace and stability. By most accounts, the world is now more violent and more dangerous than at any point in recent history.

In 2024, the number of state-based conflicts worldwide reached its highest level since 1946. Military expenditures have risen for 10 consecutive years, surpassing USD 2.7 trillion annually.

A record number of children have been victims of armed conflict, and gains in women's rights hang in the balance around the world amid record levels of conflict.

The world is confronting converging crises. In September 2024, the United Nations convened the Summit for the Future, an initiative by the UN secretary-general aimed at addressing the collapse of the post-Cold War multilateral system, as well as the increasing number of conflicts and humanitarian emergencies. All of this is occurring in the climate change era.

These crises are interlinked, as violence becomes more likely as a consequence of rising temperatures and drought conditions. Militaries are also responsible for high levels of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental destruction from war amounting, in some cases, to the crime of ecocide.

Increased military spending

The overwhelming response to rising global violence and insecurity has been to boost military funding.

In Europe, this is partly driven by a justified fear of Russian aggression following its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The risk of Russia dragging NATO into a conflict remains a constant concern, which was evident when Russia recently sent drones over Polish and Romanian airspace.

At the 2025 NATO summit, under pressure from the Americans, members pledged to allocate 5 per cent of their GDP annually to core defence needs and defence and security-related expenses by 2035. Most European countries had already increased their military budgets in 2024; so has Russia.

China's military spending has consistently increased over the past 30 years. The United States, the world's largest military spender, also boosted spending in 2024 as it continues to send vast amounts of military aid to Israel, which the United Nations has confirmed is committing genocide against the Palestinians.

The cost of neglect

Meanwhile, organisations invested in peacemaking and peacebuilding continue to face funding shortages. The sector has been described as "being stripped and downsized."

This was on display when Donald Trump's administration defunded and shut down the United States Institute of Peace, a congressionally established institution, within months of taking office.

Nevertheless, peace organisations have struggled with funding cuts for some time, experiencing reduced support for core costs and a shift towards more project-based funding, which has increased competition and pressure from donors.

The consequences of underfunding peace are not abstract.

American funding cuts and a global backlash against women's rights have pushed gender equality off the agenda.

Violence against women and girls remains severe in places like Afghanistan, where the Taliban has created a system of gender apartheid, and Palestine, where the Reem Alsalem, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, has called Israel's deliberate killings of Palestinian women and girls a femi-genocide.

A global crisis of violence

In this more globally fragmented world, international peace architecture is crumbling amid growing tensions between powerful states, and humanitarian needs continue to rise largely due to violent conflicts. So why do governments persist in spending more on their militaries and arms, while investing very little in peacebuilding and peacemaking?

Many others in the peace community have made similar appeals.

Deal-making rather than solutions

We are also witnessing a concerning shift from peacemaking to deal-making, along with the abandonment of liberal peacemaking norms, such as inclusivity and impartiality.

Further evidence of the failure of peacemaking is the move towards short "tactical pauses" in fighting rather than the negotiation of more sustainable solutions to conflicts.

Unless states rebalance their investments towards peacebuilding, the current trajectory points to escalating insecurity, further undermining international norms, human rights and security.Disproportionately relying on military spending for security purposes fails to prevent conflict and has a detrimental impact on gender equality, human rights and peacemaking.

States must resist the urge to continually increase their military budgets to the excessive levels they are now approaching; instead, they must also invest in peace research, mediation efforts and peacebuilding organisations.

—The Conversation

The overwhelming response to rising global violence and insecurity has been to boost military funding **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

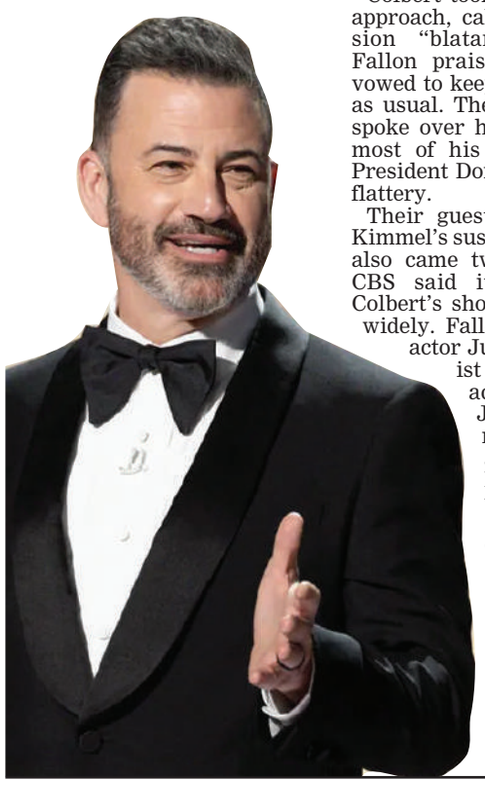
LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Talk show hosts unite as Don mutes Kimmel, chokes free speech

NEW YORK, 19 SEPT

Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Fallon opened their late-night shows using a mix of humour and solidarity with suspended ABC host Jimmy Kimmel.



Stewart on Thursday opted for satire to critique ABC suspending "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" indefinitely following comments he made about the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

Colbert took a more serious approach, calling his suspension "blatant censorship". Fallon praised Kimmel and vowed to keep doing his show as usual. Then an announcer spoke over him and replaced most of his critiques about President Donald Trump with flattery.

Their guests the day after Kimmel's suspension — which also came two months after CBS said it would cancel Colbert's show — also varied widely. Fallon's guests were actor Jude Law, journalist Tom Llamas and actor and singer Jonathan Groff — none of whom addressed Kimmel's situation.

Stewart and Colbert interviewed guests who could address censorship concerns raised by Kimmel's suspension. Journalist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Maria Ressa spoke to Stewart.

When Stewart asked Ressa, the author of "How to Stand Up to a Dictator", tips on coping with the current moment, Ressa recounted how she and her colleagues at the news site Rappler "just kept going" when she was faced with 11 arrest warrants in one year under then-President Rodrigo Duterte.

"We just kept doing our jobs. We just kept putting one foot in front of the other," Ressa said.

Stewart's show opened with a voiceover promising adherence to the party line.

"We have another fun, hilarious administration-compliant show," it said.

He lavished praise on the president and satirised his criticism of large cities and his deployment of the National Guard to fight their crime.

"Coming to you tonight from the real (expletive), the crime-ridden cesspool that is New York City. It is a tremendous disaster like no one's ever seen before. Someone's National Guard should invade this place, am I right?" Stewart said.

'The Daily Show' set was refashioned with decorative gold engravings, in a parody of gold accents Trump has added to the fireplace, doorway arches, walls and other areas of the Oval Office.

Stewart fidgeted nervously as though he was worried about speaking the correct talking points. When the audience members reacted with an "awww" he whispered: "What are you doing? Shut up. You're going to (expletive) blow this for us."

He took on a more stilted tone when he started describing Trump's visit to the United Kingdom, calling the president "our great father."

"Gaze upon him. With a gait even more majestic than that of the royal horses that prance before him," he said.

Stewart normally hosts only on Mondays. The Emmy winner helmed 'The Daily Show' from 1999 through 2015, delivering sharp, satirical takes on politics and current events and interviews with newsmakers. He returned to host once a week during the run-up to the 2024 US presidential election.

Fallon opened his 'Tonight Show' monologue addressing Kimmel's suspension. "To be honest with you all, I don't know what's going on. And no one does. But I do know Jimmy Kimmel, and he's a decent, funny and loving guy, and I hope he comes back."

Kimmel made several remarks about the reaction to Kirk's killing on 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' Monday and Tuesday nights, including that "many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalise on the murder of Charlie Kirk."

ABC suspended Kimmel's show after a group of ABC-affiliated stations said it would not air the show, and Federal Communications Commission chairman Brendan Carr said his agency had a strong case for holding Kimmel, ABC and network parent Walt Disney Co. accountable for spreading misinformation.

Kimmel has not commented. His supporters say Carr misread what the comic said and that nowhere did he specifically suggest that Tyler Robinson — the man Utah authorities allege fatally shot Kirk — was conservative.

In July, CBS said it would cancel 'The Late Show With Stephen Colbert' next May. The network said it shut down the decades-old TV institution for financial reasons. But the announcement came three days after Colbert criticised the settlement between President Donald Trump and Paramount Global, parent company of CBS, over a "60 Minutes" story.

Colbert started his monologue on Thursday with the animated song "Be Our Guest" from Disney's "Beauty and the Beast", but replaced the lyrics with "Shut your trap. Shut your trap."

He later addressed Kimmel directly, saying that he stands with him and his staff.

"If ABC thinks that this is going to satisfy the regime, they are woefully naive," he said. He also responded to remarks Carr made that it is important for broadcasters to push back on Disney programming "they determine falls short of community values."

When Colbert talked with New Yorker editor David Remnick about Kimmel's suspension, he said: "What we are seeing now is the government acting at the direction of the president of the United States to put pressure on, to manipulate, to silence and even to shut down institutions of the free word."

David Letterman, Colbert's predecessor on 'The Late Show,' lamented the networks' moves. "I feel bad about this, because we all see where see this is going, correct? It's managed media," Letterman said during an appearance Thursday at The Atlantic Festival 2025 in New York. "It's no good. It's silly. It's ridiculous." He added that people shouldn't be fired just because they don't "suck up" to what he called "an authoritarian" president. *—PTI*

Now, Hungary to designate Antifa as terror organisation

BUDAPEST, 19 SEP

Hungary will follow the US in designating Antifa as a terrorist organisation, Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced on Friday, expressing approval of US President Donald Trump's similar plan. "Antifa is indeed a terrorist organisation," Orban stated, noting, "In Hungary, too, the time has come for us to classify organisations such as Antifa as terrorist organisations, following the American model." Orban cited a 2023 incident involving Antifascist activists attacking participants at a far-right event in Budapest as part of his rationale. The release of Italian Antifascist activist Ilaria Salis, who faced legal issues in Hungary, further inflamed tensions. Orban lamented her release, arguing that Antifa had "come to Hungary and beaten peaceful people in the street." *—PTI*

Carney meets Mexican Prez amid US trade tensions

MEXICO CITY, 19 SEPT

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney met with President Claudia Sheinbaum in Mexico City during a two-day visit focused on diversifying trade under US tariff threats and supporting the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). The agreement is due for review in 2026, with over 75 per cent of Canada's and more than 80 per cent of Mexico's exports going to the US. Sheinbaum stated, "The idea is to strengthen trade through ports between Canada and Mexico on both oceans," aiming to bypass US passage. Canadian Senator Peter Boehm highlighted concerns over comments from provincial premiers that upset Mexico and noted, "The Mexicans are particularly sensitive on these matters." Carney's visit includes one-on-one meetings and discussions with cabinet members. *—PTI*

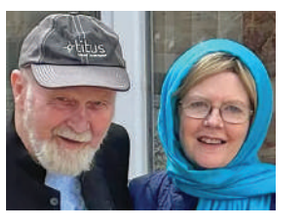


PHOTO: X

Taliban frees UK couple held in Afghan for months

DUBAI, 19 SEPT

A British couple, Peter and Barbie Reynolds, aged 80 and 75, has been released by the Taliban after being held in Afghanistan for more than seven months on undisclosed charges. This release is part of a broader effort by the Taliban to gain international recognition since they seized power in 2021. The Reynolds, who had lived in Afghanistan for 18 years and operated an education and training organisation in Bamiyan, chose to stay in the country following the Taliban takeover. Their release was facilitated by Qatar, which acted as a mediator in the negotiations. While the Taliban denied claims of abuse, they have not provided any details regarding the reasons behind the couple's detention. *—PTI*

MI6 chief sees no evidence of Putin seeking peace

ISTANBUL, 19 SEP

The head of Britain's foreign intelligence agency, Sir Richard Moore, has asserted that there is "absolutely no evidence" that Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking to negotiate peace in Ukraine, describing actions as merely "stringing us along." Speaking at the British consulate in Istanbul, Moore stated, "He seeks to impose his imperial will by all means at his disposal. But he cannot succeed." He bluntly noted, "Putin has bitten off more than he can chew. He thought he was going to win an easy victory. But he—and many others— underestimated the Ukrainians." Sir Richard Moore, who has led MI6 for five years, is set to step down at the end of September. *—PTI*

Trump and Xi may seal the TikTok deal

China urges US against trade restrictions; Don to meet Xi next month, visit China next year

WASHINGTON, 19 SEPT

US President Donald Trump spoke to Chinese Premier Xi Jinping on Friday and appeared to finalise a deal on social media platform TikTok. Trump said that he and Xi will meet next month in South Korea during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit and that he will visit China next year.

TikTok had been facing scrutiny in the US over its China ties, and was threatened with ban if its Chinese parent company didn't sells its controlling stake.

That deal will reportedly see a group of US firms- said to include Oracle - that would enable TikTok to continue operating in the US, using algorithm technology licensed from ByteDance.

"I just completed a very productive call with Xi. We made progress on many very important issues including trade, fentanyl, the need to bring the war between Russia and Ukraine to an end, and the approval of the TikTok deal," Trump wrote on Truth Social. He added that Xi agreed to visit the US at the "appropriate time."

"The call was a very good one, we will be speaking again by phone, appreciate the TikTok approval, and both look forward to meeting at APEC!" Trump added.

This was the second call with Xi since Trump returned to the White House and launched sky-high tariffs on China.

According to a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Xi told Trump to avoid imposing "unilateral trade restrictions". He also hoped that the US will provide an "open, fair, and non-discriminatory business environment" for Chinese companies investing in the US.

Ahead of the talks, Trump declined to give approval for USD 400 million of military aid to Taiwan. *—Salar News*

Chinese Premiere Xi Jinping with US President Donald Trump **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump flays Dem Rep by saying she's Somalian

Trump said Democratic Representative Ilhan Omar should not advise US policy, claiming that her "Country of Somalia is plagued by a lack of central Government control, persistent poverty, hunger, Resurgent Terrorism, Piracy, decades of Civil War..... Wasn't she the one that married her brother in order to gain Citizenship???" Omar was born in Somalia before moving to the US in 1990.

Didn't want to see London Mayor: Trump

Trump said he "didn't want" London Mayor Sir Sadiq Khan at the state banquet hosted by the King at Windsor Castle during his second state visit to the UK. Speaking to reporters on Air Force One heading back the US, Trump described Sadiq as "among the worst mayors in the world", saying he had wanted to attend the event, but "I asked that he not be there".

NYC officials held for protesting ICE facility

More than a dozen elected officials were arrested Thursday while protesting conditions at a New York City immigration holding facility. The officials were among 77 people detained during protests at 26 Federal Plaza in Manhattan. In court filings, detainees of the facility complained they were fed inedible "slop" and endured the "horrific stench" of sweat, urine and feces.

Taliban, China reject US' idea to takeover Afghan airbase

BEIJING/KABUL, 19 SEPT

China and the Taliban on Friday rejected US President Donald Trump's proposal to reclaim Afghanistan's strategic Bagram air base near the Chinese border, with Beijing cautioning against efforts to stir regional confrontation and Kabul reiterating that Afghans never accepted foreign military presence. The Bagram air base was abandoned by American troops four years ago during their chaotic withdrawal ordered by then president Joe Biden, as Taliban militants took control of Kabul.

Trump, speaking at a joint press conference in the UK with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, on Thursday said he was trying to get the base back because of its proximity to where China makes nuclear weapons.

Taliban official Zakir Jalal said the interim Afghanistan government "completely rejects" the idea.

Similarly, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said "stirring up tension and confrontation in the region will not be supported". *—PTI*

The Bagran airbase in Afghanistan is one of the largest in the region. Trump wants it because of its proximity to where China builds nuclear weapons **PHOTO: PTI**

Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman, Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **PHOTO: PTI**

Munir open to other countries joining Pak-Saudi deal

ISLAMABAD, 19 SEPT

The entry of other Arab countries in the mutual defence deal between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is not ruled out, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said, adding that "doors are not closed" for such developments.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday signed a "strategic mutual defence" agreement, which declares that any attack on either country will be considered "an aggression against both".

The deal was signed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during the Pakistani leader's day-long visit to the Gulf Kingdom.

Asif, during an interview to Geo News on Tuesday, said he had always called for a similar arrangement like NATO. "I think it is a fundamental right of the countries and people here, particularly the Muslim population, to together defend their region".

He said there was no clause in the deal that ruled out the entry of any other nation or that Pakistan could not sign a similar agreement with anyone else.

Asif said Pakistan's arsenal – including nuclear assets – "will absolutely" by available under the pact.

Questioned about whether the US was taken into confidence on the matter, Asif said there was "no ground or justification" for any other third party to be involved.

"This agreement will not be a hegemonic arrangement but a defensive arrangement... We don't have any plans to conquer territory or attack anyone," Asif said. "We were swept into two wars in Afghanistan. The US, on both occasions, left the region and we are still dealing with the consequences." *—PTI*

Open to compromises on talks with Ukraine: Russian FM

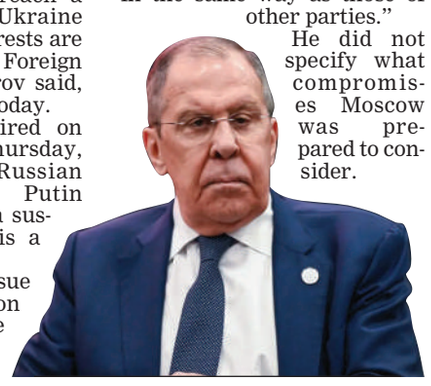
MOSCOW, 19 SEPT

Russia is ready to reach a compromise with Ukraine provided its core interests are safeguarded, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, according to Russia Today.

In an interview aired on Channel One on Thursday, Lavrov said, "Russian President Vladimir Putin repeatedly said that a sustainable agreement is a compromise.

We are ready to pursue one on the condition that our legitimate security interests, as well as the legitimate interests of Russians living in Ukraine, are respected in the same way as those of other parties."

He did not specify what compromises Moscow was prepared to consider.



RUSSIAN JETS BREACH ESTONIAN AIRSPACE

Estonia summoned a Russian diplomat after three Russian fighter aircraft entered its airspace without permission on Friday, the Foreign Ministry said.

Foreign Minister Margus Tsakhna said that Russia had already violated Estonian airspace four times this year "but today's incursion, involving three fighter aircraft entering our airspace, is unprecedentedly brazen". The incursion took place over the Gulf of Finland and three Russian MIG-31 fighters were involved. *—Agencies*

US vetoes UN resolution on Gaza ceasefire; 14 countries voted for it

UNITED NATIONS, 19 SEPT

The United States once again vetoed a UN Security Council resolution Thursday that had demanded an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and the release of hostages, saying that the effort did not go far enough in condemning Hamas.

The 14 other members of the United Nations' most powerful body voted in favour of the resolution, which described the humanitarian situation in Gaza as "catastrophic" and called on Israel to lift all restrictions on the delivery of aid to the 2.1 million Palestinians in the territory.

The vote came just days before the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly, where Gaza will be a major topic and major US allies are expected to recognise an independent Palestinian state. It is a largely symbolic move but is vehemently opposed by Israel and the US. *—PTI*

The Israeli military says about 4,80,000 Palestinians have fled southwards from Gaza City since late August, as it killed at least 28 Palestinians in its onslaught on the city on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

US blocks Pak's bid to sanction BLA

The US, the UK, and France blocked a joint Pakistan-China bid to sanction the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the Majeed Brigade at the UN, a month after Washington declared both groups as Foreign Terrorist Organisations.

NEPAL MARKS CONSTITUTION DAY POST REVOLT

KATHMANDU, 19 SEPT

Nepal Prime Minister Sushila Karki marked the 10th Constitution Day on 19 September 19, emphasising that and implementing the Constitution is a collective duty of all Nepalis. "Listening to the voice of the people is the soul of democracy," Karki stated at the event in Kathmandu, which was muted this year following violent protests led by Gen Z that resulted in 72 deaths and the ousting of former prime minister KP Sharma Oli.

President Ramchandra Paudel highlighted the Constitution's role in fostering national unity amid diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, calling for unity to achieve peace and development. In a separate rally, Gen Z activists pledged to uphold their movement's gains.

Oli, after resigning on 9 September, fled to a military barracks for security, where he called for unity to protect the Constitution. "We are under a major attack on our constitution," he warned in his first comments.

He described the unrest as being fuelled by a "spoiled fictional statement" that misled the youth and destabilised the nation.

—Agencies

AMID US PRESSURE

Iran bins UN resolution on attacks on nuke sites

VIENNA, 18 SEPT

Iran decided at the last-minute Thursday to withdraw a resolution prohibiting attacks on nuclear facilities that it had put forward along with China, Russia and other countries for a vote before an annual gathering of the UN nuclear watchdog's member nations.

Western diplomat sources said the US has been heavily lobbying behind the scenes to prevent the resolution from being adopted.

The US has raised the possibility of reducing funding to the International Atomic Energy Agency if the resolution was adopted and if the body moved to curtail Israel's rights within the agency, the diplomats said.

Addressing the IAEA's General Conference late Thursday, Iran's Ambassador to the UN Reza Najafi announced that "guided by the spirit of goodwill and constructive engagement, and at the request of several member states," it deferred action on the draft until next year's conference.

In 1981, the provision of assistance to Israel under the IAEA's technical assistance programme was suspended as a result of an Israeli strike on a nuclear reactor in Iraq. At the time, the attack was strongly condemned in resolutions by the UN Security Council, the IAEA General Conference and the IAEA Board of Governors.

This comes as the UN Security Council voted against halting Europe's snapback sanctions on Iran over its nuclear programme. *—PTI*

Iran had moved the resolution after US and Israel bombed its nuclear facilities in June **PHOTO: PTI**

- The US has raised the possibility of reducing funding to the International Atomic Energy Agency if the resolution was adopted and if the body moved to curtail Israel's rights within the agency, diplomats said

MACRON TO OFFER 'SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE' THAT HIS WIFE IS A WOMAN

PARIS, 19 SEPT

Emmanuel Macron and his wife, Brigitte, are planning to scientific evidence to a US court to prove that the French first lady is a woman, their lawyers said. The couple will present the documentation in a defamation lawsuit they have taken against American Right-wing podcaster Candace Owens after she repeatedly accused Brigitte of being born a male.

Speaking on BBC's Fame Under Fire podcast, Tom Clare, a lawyer for the Macrons, said that Brigitte found the claims "incredibly upsetting".

Clare said that the couple was fully prepared to demonstrate "both generically and specifically" that the Owen's allegations are false. There would be an "expert testimony that will come out that will be scientific in nature," he said.

Clare said the Macrons would be supplying pictures of Brigitte pregnant and raising her children. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold rebounds by Rs 800 to Rs 1.14 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Gold prices rebounded sharply by Rs 800 to Rs 1,14,000 per 10g in the national capital on Friday tracking firm global cues amid escalating geopolitical tensions and renewed trade frictions between the US and China. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,13,200 per 10g on Thursday. In the local bullion market, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also increased by Rs 700 to Rs 1,13,500 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). The precious metal had settled at Rs 1,12,800 per 10g in the previous trade. On the global front, spot gold rose 0.18 per cent at USD 3,651.18 per ounce while spot silver went up nearly 1 per cent to USD 42.16 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee rises by 9P, closes at 88.11 against USD

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

The rupee appreciated 9 paise to close at 88.11 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by optimism on US-India trade negotiations. Likely intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also helped the domestic unit in controlling volatility and preventing a quick depreciation, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.22, then touched an intraday low of 88.34 and a high of 88.06 against the greenback. The domestic unit finally settled at 88.11 (provisional), higher by 9 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 35 paise to close at 88.20 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.17 per cent to 97.51. *—PTI*

Fire disrupts production at Aurobindo plant

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Aurobindo Pharma on Friday reported a minor fire at Unit IV of its wholly owned subsidiary APL Healthcare Ltd in Naidupeta, Andhra Pradesh, causing temporary production disruption. The incident occurred on 18 September, 2025 at around 8.50am in granulation area-10 due to a short circuit. The fire spread to a panel, partially damaging granulation areas 10 and 8. Out of 19 production lines, two have been affected and are expected to be non-operational for about two weeks. The fire was quickly controlled by the in-house fire team with external assistance, and no injuries were reported. The company said the incident impacts roughly 3 per cent of the unit's monthly output, with no material financial or operational consequences. *—PTI*

CESC investing ₹5,000 cr in clean energy projects

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

CESC Green Power is in the process of investing Rs 5,000 crore across various segments of clean energy, including a 3 GW solar cell/module plant. CESC Green Power is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CESC Ltd, a RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group company. "CESC Green Power Ltd is in the process of setting up Solar Cell / Module and other value chain/ancillary manufacturing across various locations in India, including a 3+ GW solar cell/module plant, battery manufacturing, a 60 MW RE power plant, and various ancillary units, with an estimated total capital investment of up to Rs 5,000 crore," CESC said in an exchange filing. The investment support will include equity infusion, strategic assistance, and facilitating institutional funding, it added. *—PTI*

Adani Group mkt valuation surges Rs 69,000 crore

Adani Power zooms by 12%, Total Gas surges by 7.35%

Gautam Adani
PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Adani Group companies gained over Rs 69,000 crore in market capitalisation in a single session on Friday, fueled by a buying frenzy following SEBI's clean chit in the Hindenburg case.

The regulator's order, which dismissed allegations of stock manipulation and related-party misuse, ignited a surge of investor confidence, sending Adani stocks sharply higher across the board.

Leading the charge, Adani Power surged 12.40 per cent, emerging as the top gainer across the group's listed entities. Adani Total Gas jumped 7.35 per cent, while Adani Green Energy and Adani Enterprises climbed 5.33 per cent and 5.04 per cent, respectively, according to stock exchange data.

Adani Energy Solutions rose 4.70 per cent, rounding out the list of companies that saw gains above 4.5 per cent mark.

Adding to the momentum, Morgan Stanley initiated coverage on Adani Power, marking the first such recommendation in more than a decade by the research house. The move is being read as a signal that confidence is returning not just among retail investors but also across global institutional stakeholders, who had largely stayed on the sidelines since the Hindenburg-triggered crash.

The rally came just a day after SEBI concluded its investigation, stating that it found no evidence to support the accusations raised by US-based short seller Hindenburg Research in early 2023. Those allegations had erased nearly USD 150 billion in market value across Adani Group stocks at their peak, sparking a global debate on governance, transparency, and political influence.

Adani Group companies dominated the top gainers list on the exchanges, and the trading volumes in these counters reflected heightened investor activity. The surge was particularly notable in energy-related stocks, but the impact was broad-based across the group, from its flagship incubator company to its media arm.

Adani Power hit its 52-week high during the day. The combined market valuation of all these firms stood at Rs 13.96 lakh crore. *—PTI*

Adani Power India's largest pvt thermal producer: Report

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

Adani Power Limited (APL) has firmly established itself as India's largest private coal-based independent power producer (IPP), with a portfolio of 18,150 MW spread across 12 plants in eight states, according to a research report by Morgan Stanley.

APL has successfully acquired and turned around 4,370 MW of stressed assets, with integration of another 2,900 MW underway.

The private power producer has consistently maintained plant availability above 90 per cent, backed by digital operations and in-house coal sourcing and logistics expertise.

The company has emerged as a formidable coal franchise, holding an 8 per cent share in India's coal capacity and generation, second only to NTPC.

The report says, APL's market share is projected to rise to 15 per cent by FY32, supported by a capacity pipeline of 41.9 GW - 2.5 times its current portfolio.

The report says, APL has demonstrated a strong track record in reviving distressed assets. *—ANI*

SENSEX TANKS 387.73 PTS

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Markets snap 3-day gaining streak

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

Snapping its three-day gaining streak, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 387 points on Friday due to profit-taking in blue-chip shares HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank even as Adani group shares rallied after a favourable Sebi order.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 387.73 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 82,626.23. During the day, it dropped 528.04 points or 0.63 per cent to 82,485.92.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 96.55 points or 0.38 per cent to 25,327.05.

Banking, FMCG, and IT shares fell due to profit-taking while energy, realty, and metal shares emerged as gainers.

Among Sensex firms, HCL Tech, ICICI Bank, Titan, Trent, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra and HDFC Bank were the major laggards.

However, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel, SBI, NTPC and Sun Pharma were among the gainers.

All Adani group stocks rallied up to 13 per cent after markets regulator Sebi cleared billionaire Gautam Adani and his group of stock manipulation allegations made by US short-seller Hindenburg Research.

Sanghi Industries advanced 1.41 per cent, ACC climbed 1.21 per cent, Adani Ports went up by 1.09 per cent and Ambuja Cements (0.28 per cent).

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled lower while Hong Kong's Hang Seng ended in positive territory.

Markets in Europe were trading higher. US markets ended higher on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.55 per cent to USD 67.07 a barrel. *—PTI*

GST cut unlikely to pose fiscal burden on govt: Crisil

KOLKATA, 19 SEPT

Ratings firm Crisil has said the recent rationalisation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates is unlikely to create a significant fiscal burden on the government. The agency noted that while the government estimates an annualised short-term revenue loss of Rs 48,000 crore due to the change, this is relatively minor compared with total GST collections of Rs 10.6 lakh crore in the previous fiscal.

The GST Council recently approved a simplification of tax rates, reducing the existing four slabs to two - 5 per cent and 18 per cent—effective from 22 September. The revision is expected to lower prices on a wide range of goods and services and could bring more items under the formal tax net, supporting tax buoyancy over the medium term.

Before the rationalisation, the majority of GST revenue (70–75 per cent) came from the 18 per cent slab, while the 12 per cent slab contributed only five to six per cent and the 28 per cent slab 13–15 per cent. Crisil noted that lowering rates on items from the 12 per cent slab is unlikely to cause major revenue loss.

Rates remain unchanged for fast-growing services such as mobile tariffs. New sectors, including e-commerce deliveries, will attract 18 per cent GST. The report added that higher disposable incomes from reduced rates on mass-consumption items, along with producers passing tax savings onto consumers, could further drive demand and boost revenue. *—PTI*

GST 2.0 TO EASE TAX BURDEN, BOOST MSMES, FORMALISATION

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The government's announcement of GST 2.0 will not only ease tax burden on households, empower MSMEs, and accelerate formalisation, but also bring India closer to the dream of a single tax regime, a report said.

The GST overhaul will nearly triple the share of items taxed at 5 per cent, rising from 54 consumption categories to 149 categories under GST 2.0, FICCI's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy said in a report.

For rural households, the share of exempt and merit goods in their consumption basket is expected to rise sharply from 56.3 per cent to 73.5 per cent, while for urban households, this share is likely to increase from 50.5 per cent to 66.2 per cent, it said.

The study estimates that GST 2.0's rationalised rates will result in a short-term revenue loss but this can be compensated by the broader consumption boost, improved compliance, and wider coverage over time. *—PTI*

'MF INVESTMENTS CRUCIAL'

Jefferies' Chris Wood updates India portfolio

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Christopher Wood of Jefferies has restructured the GREED & Fear India long-only portfolio, notably introducing Ambuja Cements, Le Travenues Technology (Ixigo), and Lemon Tree Hotels, each receiving a 4 per cent weighting.

Meanwhile, Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries and Axis Bank have been removed from the portfolio, with ICICI Bank, REC, and JSW Energy each having their weights reduced by one percentage point. Existing stocks in the portfolio include HDFC Bank, SBI, PolicyBazaar, and others.

According to Wood, the Indian stock market is experiencing a healthy consolidation phase and is likely to trade sideways for the remainder of the year as mutual fund inflows combat equity supply.

PHOTO: PTI

He noted that the domestic market could potentially rally in the new calendar year, driven by economic growth from GST cuts and monetary easing by the Reserve Bank of India.

Wood said, "This means there is still a chance that the 10-15 per cent return target proves to be too modest."

Wood posits that India could achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of a $10 trillion economy by the mid-2030s. He said, "Longer term, assuming a trend 10 per cent nominal GDP growth rate... this is an entirely reasonable projection."

Jefferies' report emphasised that ongoing mutual fund investments are crucial in preventing a sharper market decline. Despite potential supply of USD 50-70 billion over the next year, the outlook for India's long-term equity market remains optimistic, particularly within the small- to mid-cap segments. *—Agencies*

OYO unveils 'CheckIn' for premium hotels

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

PRISM, the parent company of OYO, on Friday announced the launch of CheckIn, a new vertical uniting its premium hotel and homestay offerings.

The platform will showcase premium hotels, homes, and experiences, including SUNDAY Hotels, Clubhouse, Palette, as well as European holiday homes such as CheckMyGuest, Dancenter, Belvilla, and others.

CheckIn is designed to cater to the premium and luxury segment, while the OYO app will continue serving budget-conscious travellers.

Ritesh Agarwal, Founder and Group CEO of PRISM, said the platform provides two key benefits first, assurance of high-quality standards across properties and second, the convenience of accessing diverse premium options without navigating through multiple platforms. *—PTI*

Russia-India to hold business dialogue on 26 September

LUCKNOW, 19 SEPT

A Russia-India business dialogue will be held on 26 September as part of the UP International Trade Show, at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.

The event is expected to boost economic ties between India and Russia, while reinforcing Uttar Pradesh's position as a global investment hub, an official statement said.

The primary objective of the programme is to take trade and economic cooperation between India and Russia to new heights, promote technological cooperation, and encourage joint ventures. Special discussions will be held on sectors such as banking and investment, insurance, education, and general trade.

The dialogue will not only strengthen economic relations between the two countries but will also benefit industries and businesses of the state. It will also consider technology transfer, capacity building, and new investment models.

Experts believe that the partnership between Russia and India will generate new opportunities in the fields of education, insurance, and investment.

Additionally, participation of Russian companies in ongoing industrial policies and mega projects in Uttar Pradesh will further increase employment and development opportunities, the statement said. The third edition of UP International Trade Show will be held from 25-29 September.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is steadily transforming Uttar Pradesh into a hub for global investment, said sources. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI

BLOWS EXCHANGED

Scuffle erupts amid wait for new iPhone 17

MUMBAI, 19 SEPT

Sale of the new series of iPhones started on Friday, with excited customers queuing up outside the country's first Apple Store since early hours and even indulging in a scuffle before its opening.

Like with the launch of any new model, excited customers started queuing up outside the store at the Jio World Drive mall in the Bandra Kurla Complex business district in the wee hours.

A little before 6am, a scuffle broke out among some of the customers who had queued up, prompting the security personnel to intervene.

A little before 6am, a scuffle broke out among some of the customers who had queued up
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Visuals show a group of Apple customers exchanging blows and being taken away by both private and government security personnel. The police was also forced to resort to mild caning and dragged the miscreants out.

As per the city police, there were about 300 customers in two different lines outside the store and a minor scuffle erupted because one person tried to break into the queue.

Once the store opened at the designated time of 8am, it was a smooth flow with customers going in and quickly picking up units of their desired model.

In the run up to the retailing of the newest series launched earlier this month in the US, Apple had put up a unique marketing display outside the store and its chief executive Tim Cook has even shared a picture of the Mumbai store over his social media handle. *—PTI*

SC to hear VI's plea on ₹9,450 cr revenue dues

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

The Supreme Court has scheduled hearing for 26 September regarding Vodafone Idea (AI) Ltd's request to quash additional Rs 9,450 crore in Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) demands up to the fiscal year 2016-17.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai, Justices K Vinod Chandran, and NV Anjaria took note of arguments from senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

Mehta indicated that "the circumstances have changed" and that both parties seek an amicable solution. VI filed a fresh plea on 8 September, urging the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to reassess and reconcile AGR dues per the 'Deduction Verification Guidelines' issued on 3 February 2020.

Earlier, the Court dismissed appeals from leading telecom firms, including VI and Bharti Airtel, to review its 2021 ruling on AGR calculations, stating the DoT's demands were final and non-negotiable.

The apex court had previously mandated a 10-year timeline for telcos to clear dues of Rs 93,520 crore, starting from 1 April 2021. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

I let slip a World Championship medal: Sachin

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Outperforming the likes of Neeraj Chopra and Julian Weber in his debut World Championship is a nice feeling, but India's newfound javelin throw talent, Sachin Yadav, says it cannot make up for the disappointment of "letting slip" an unlikely bronze after a strong start. Unheralded Yadav, participating in only his second international event, upstaged celebrated competitors like two-time Olympic medallist Chopra (84.03m), reigning Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (82.75m), and Diamond League trophy winner Julian Weber (86.11m) in Tokyo on Thursday in a surprisingly strong show.The Indian's first-round throw of 86.27m was a personal best, bettering the earlier mark of 85.16m recorded while winning a silver in the Asian Championships in May, which was his first international event.—*PTI*

Liverpool probed for discriminatory language

LIVERPOOL, 19 SEPT

Liverpool says the Football Association has opened an investigation into alleged discriminatory comments made by a goalkeeper in its women's team. Rafaela Borggrafe's alleged remarks were overheard by Liverpool teammates and staff during a squad photo shoot, Britain's PA News agency reported Friday. When contacted by The Associated Press about the reports involving Borggrafe, Liverpool Women said in a statement the club was "aware of an alleged use of discriminatory language by an LFC Women's player." "The club has followed its protocols to the fullest extent, and the alleged incident has been reported to the FA, which is investigating with our full support," the statement read. "We condemn all forms of discrimination; it has no place in football or society. We are unable to comment further while the investigation is ongoing."—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Back-to-back wins for Bhullar on IGPL circuit

GREATER NOIDA, 19 SEPT

Gaganjeet Bhullar shot 6-under 64, the best card so far in two IGPL tournaments, and became the first back-to-back winner on the circuit here on Friday. Bhullar shot 72-68-64 for an 8-under total at the Jaypee course, which played to a par of 72 on the first day and then 70 on the final two days.Bhullar was thrilled to have gotten the IGPL to a flying start with two wins in many starts. For the second straight week, Bhullar took home a cheque of Rs. 22.50 lakh.Pukhraj Singh Gills (6-under) was second, and Kartik Singh (4-under), who had a double bogey finish, was third.—*PTI*

Father's death: Wellalage returns home from AC

DUBAI, 19 SEPT

Sri Lanka's Dunith Wellalage has returned home from the ongoing Asia Cup after his father, Suranga, passed away on Thursday night, the same day when the all-rounder was playing a Group B league match against Afghanistan here. Wellalage learned of his father's demise only after the match, and he left for Colombo on the earliest available flight. Suranga died after suffering a heart attack. He was 54.—*PTI*

Satwik-Chirag pair storms into SFs; Sindhu bows out

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty *PHOTO: PTI*

SHENZHEN, 6 JUNE

India's top men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty continued their consistent run to advance to the semifinals of the China Masters Super 750 badminton tournament, but PV Sindhu bowed out after falling yet again to Olympic champion An Se Young here on Friday.

Satwik and Chirag, the former world No.1 Indian duo, who recently clinched their second World Championships bronze in Paris and finished runners-up at the Hong Kong Open last week, produced a clinical performance to outclass the Chinese pair of Ren Xiang Yu and Xie Haonan 21-14, 21-14 in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu's struggles against An Se Young continued, as the Korean dominated proceedings from the start.

Sindhu started poorly and trailed 1-6 before narrowing it to 5-9 with a delicate cross-court drop.However, An used her trademark smashes to open up an 11-5 lead at the interval.

Sindhu managed to close in at 11-14, but the Korean maintained her grip and sealed the opener when the Indian buried one into the net.In the second game, Sindhu briefly led 3-2 but An soon regained control.

The Indian tried to push with attacking play and trailed 7-8, but An's superior deception and variety helped her go into the break 11-7 ahead.An pulled away to 14-7 after resumption and never looked back.Sindhu played some fine front-court drops and round-the-head smashes to gather a few points, but the Korean was always a step ahead."We felt quite comfortable out there.

Our goal was just to focus on our game and see how they responded. Right now, the way we're playing, it feels great especially being able to play back-to-back matches freely, without any niggles, really happy with how we played today," Satwik said.Chirag added, "I think we made it tough for them right from the start. —*PTI*

Pressure will be on India: Coach Khalid

India will face Singapore on 9 October in Kallang

BENGALURU, 19 SEPT

AFC ASIAN QUALIFIERS

Khalid Jamil *PHOTO: PTI*

Sandesh *PHOTO: PTI*

India will have the towering presence of ace defender Sandesh Jhingan during their AFC Asian Qualifiers against Singapore next month, coach Khalid Jamil said here on Friday.

Jhingan has been recuperating from a cheekbone surgery due to an injury sustained during the recent CAFA Nations Cup in Tajikistan, where India finished a creditable third. India will face Singapore in an away tie on 9 October at the National Stadium in Kallang, and in the return match, they will host the Asian neighbours at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Goa. AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said the governing body has been working in a "dedicated" manner to start this season's Indian Super League, currently on hold due to uncertainty surrounding the renewal of the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) between the AIFF and Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL). "We are trying to be dedicated, determined, and focused. We will ensure that certain things are done. Leagues need to be completed on or before the 31st of May.

Brandon and Asheer called up for national camp

The Indian football team management has summoned midfielder Brandon Fernandes and defender Asheer Akhtar for the national camp, conducted by head coach Khalid Jamil, for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Singapore.In addition to the 30-member probables, Brandon Fernandes and Asheer Akhtar have been called up to the national camp the All India Football Federation. —*PTI*

India chase historic maiden WODI series triumph against Australia

NEW DELHI, 19 SEPT

Riding high on a record-breaking performance, India will eye a historic first-ever women's ODI series win over the mighty Australia when the two sides clash in the decider of the three-match fixture here on Saturday. The hosts have never managed to conquer the all-powerful world champions in a bilateral series, and a victory here would not only deliver that elusive triumph but also provide a timely surge of belief and momentum heading into the World Cup starting September 30.

However, it will be easier said than done. After being outplayed in the opener, Harmanpreet Kaur and her team roared back with a stunning 102-run victory, which was Australia's heaviest defeat in terms of runs. It was also India's first win over them in 12 matches.

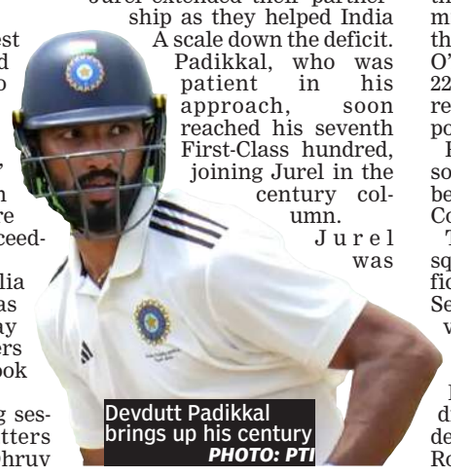
India W vs Australia W
Match starts: 1:30 pm IST
PHOTO: PTI

Australia fined for slow over-rate

The Australian women's cricket team was on Friday fined 10 per cent of its match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against India in the second One Day International in Mullanpur. —*PTI*

India A and Australia A play out a draw

LUCKNOW, 19 SEPT



Devdutt Padikkal brings up his century *PHOTO: PTI*

The first unofficial Test between India A and Australia A petered out to a draw on the final day in Lucknow on Friday.

India A came one run short of its opponents' first-innings total early in the second session before rain disrupted the proceedings.

After the break, Australia A openers Sam Konstas and Campbell Kellaway added 56 runs in 16 overs before the two teams shook hands on a draw.

Earlier, in the morning session, overnight batters Devdutt Padikkal and Dhruv Jurel extended their partnership as they helped India A scale down the deficit.

Padikkal, who was patient in his approach, soon reached his seventh First-Class hundred, joining Jurel in the century column.

Jurel was the first of the two to be dismissed, after being caught off the bowling of seamer Fergus O'Neill, bringing an end to a 228-run partnership which rescued India-A from a tricky position.

Padikkal pushed on and soon got to his 150, before being dismissed by off-spinner Corey Rocchiccioli.

The two teams will now square off in the second unofficial Test, which will start on September 23 at the same venue.

Australia A 532 for 6 dec (Philippe 123*, Konstas 109, Dubey 3-141) and 56 for 0 drew with India A 531 for 7 dec (Padikkal 150, Jurel 140, Rocchiccioli 3-159) —*PTI*

F1: McLaren heads into Azerbaijan GP

DUBAI, 19 SEPT

The Formula 1 title race is heating up, and McLaren's golden rule, "Let 'em race," risks expanding into a whole rule book.

Asking Oscar Piastri to give up second place to Lando Norris at the Italian Grand Prix because of a slow pit stop showed how McLaren's seemingly simple approach risks being bogged down in debates about what's fair on track.

The battle between Norris and Piastri will become McLaren's sole focus if the team can wrap up the constructors' title Sunday at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in Baku with a record seven races remaining. —*PTI*

THANGARAJA WINS CHENNAI OPEN

CHENNAI, 19 SEPT

Sri Lankan N Thangaraja carded a one-over 73 on the final day to claim a one-shot win at the Rs 1 crore Chennai Open here on Friday.

Thangaraja (69-66-63-73), the overnight leader, came through by one stroke on a high-scoring last day as he totalled 17-under 271 for the week. The 44-year-old Colombo resident thus collected the winning prize of Rs 15 lakh that lifted him from 12th to sixth position in the 2025 PGTI Order of Merit.

The trio of Noida's Amardeep Malik (68-71-67-66), who closed the day with an eagle, Delhi's Shaurya Bhattacharya (67-65-69-71), and Gurugram's Manu Gandas (66-68-65-73), finished joint runners-up at a total of 16-under 272. —*PTI*

PCB says ICC allows media managers to use cameras

DUBAI, 19 SEPT

PHOTO: PTI

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Friday defended its media manager for filming a meeting between match referee Andy Pycroft and team officials ahead of their Asia Cup game against the UAE, maintaining that the action was within ICC protocols.

On Thursday, ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta had written to the PCB, citing "multiple violations" of the Players and Match Officials Area (PMOA) code, including the recording of the interaction that involved coach Mike Hesson, captain Salman Ali Agha, and manager Naveed Akram Cheema.

The ICC communication had also questioned a PCB press release which stated that Pycroft had apologised, clarifying that the referee had only expressed regret over a miscommunication caused by an Asian Cricket Council (ACC) venue manager. "The team's media manager is part of the squad and has authorised access to the PMOA.

His presence there is not a violation," said a tournament official.

Super Four: SL hope to tame B'desh

A determined Sri Lanka will take inspiration from their unbeaten group campaign and start as favourites against an inconsistent Bangladesh in the first Super Four match of the Asia Cup here on Saturday. Ably led by Charith Asalanka, the Lankans finished on top of Group B with three wins from as many matches, ahead of Bangladesh and T20 World Cup semifinalists Afghanistan. Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by six wickets before defeating Hong Kong and Afghanistan by four and six wickets respectively. —*PTI*

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Match starts at
8.00 pm IST

DP WORLD ASIA CUP 2025

WORLD ATHLETICS C'SHIPS 2025

United States' Noah Lyles celebrates after winning a gold medal in the men's 200 meters final *PHOTO: PTI*

Lyles emulates Bolt with fourth world 200m title

TOKYO, 19 SEPT

Noah Lyles matched Usain Bolt's record of four consecutive world 200 metres titles as he scorched to victory at the world championships in Tokyo on Friday.

Lyles, who won bronze in the 100m here, clocked 19.52sec for victory in what the American calls his "bread and butter" event. Bolt won his four titles from 2009-2015, going on to collect 11 world golds and eight Olympic titles. Lyles' teammate Kenny Bednarek took silver in 19.58sec, with Jamaican Bryan Levell claiming bronze in 19.64sec.

Amy Hunt *PHOTO: PTI*

Amy Hunt celebrates 200m silver

Amy Hunt insisted world 200m silver was "only the beginning" after years of determination not to let her talent "go to waste" finally paid off in Tokyo. The 23-year-old is well-acquainted with the craft of weaving a satisfying story, having taken the unusual decision to train for the track alongside completing an English degree at the University of Cambridge. —*PTI*

C'pions League: Kalmurza is youngest to save penalty

LISBON, 19 SEPT

Teenage goalkeeper Sherkhan Kalmurza saved a penalty on his debut in the Champions League for Kazakhstan team Kairat, becoming the youngest player to do so.

Kalmurza made some other fine stops but could not prevent a 4-1 loss to Sporting Lisbon in what was a debut for the Kazakh club in Europe's elite club competition.

At 18 years, 96 days old, Kalmurza was the third youngest goalkeeper to play in the tournament, UEFA said.

He also became the second youngest overall to save a penalty after Mile Svilar of Benfica, who was 18 years 65 days old when he stopped a penalty by Manchester United's Anthony Martial in 2017. It was still 0-0 when Sporting captain Morten Hjulmand sent him the wrong way, but Kalmurza managed to stretch to block the spot kick with his right leg in the 21st minute. One of the goals Kalmurza conceded was netted by another teenager at the other side, forward Geovany Quenda, who dribbled past several defenders before completing the rout at 18 years, 141 days old. —*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Marcus magic seals Barcelona victory

LONDON, 19 SEPT

Marcus Rashford proved the perfect replacement for Lamine Yamal in Barcelona's 2-1 win at Newcastle in the Champions League, and Kevin De Bruyne watched mostly from the sideline as Napoli lost 2-0 at his former club Manchester City on early Friday.

With Yamal missing through injury, Rashford, a loan signing from Manchester United, got a start on his return to England and scored both of Barcelona's goals at St. James' Park. The second took the breath away, a piledriver from 25 meters that flew in off the crossbar.

Marcus Rashford *PHOTO: X/@CL*

De Bruyne was also back on English soil, at the club where he spent 10 years before an emotional farewell in May. But his Etihad Stadium return lasted 26 minutes before he was substituted following a red card for teammate Giovanni Di Lorenzo, and City wound up a comfortable winner thanks to second-half goals from Erling Haaland and Jeremy Doku.

Haaland's header put him on 50 goals in 49 Champions League appearances, with the Norway striker reaching that milestone quicker than any other player in the competition's history.

Kairat, a tournament newcomer from Kazakhstan, made what is thought to be the longest trek for a Champions League fixture across three time zones and more than 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) and lost 4-1 at Sporting Lisbon. Sporting scored its final three goals in four minutes in the second half and also had a penalty saved.

The comeback of the night went to Eintracht Frankfurt, which recovered from conceding in the eighth minute to beat Galatasaray 5-1.

Rashford's double

England coach Thomas Tuchel was in the stands of a raucous St. James' Park to witness Rashford showcase his finishing abilities that Man United could do with right now. —*PTI*